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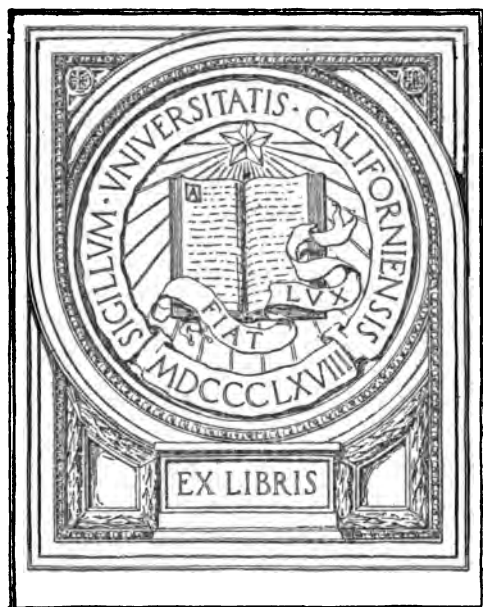
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# **YOUNGSTERS**



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TO THE  
ADVENTURE



"I'M A PIRATE!"

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CALIFORNIA

# YOUNGSTERS

COLLECTED POEMS OF CHILDHOOD

by

BURGES JOHNSON

ILLUSTRATED

by

ROLLIN CRAMPTON



NEW YORK  
E.P. DUTTON & COMPANY  
681 FIFTH AVENUE

TO THE  
ALGEBRAIC

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## FOREWORD

THESE rhymes make no pretense of consistency, or of theories about childhood. They are mostly bits of recollection, and records of experience, personal or vicarious. A great number of them have appeared before in "Pleasant Tragedies of Childhood," in "Rhymes of Little Boys" and companion volumes now out of print. There is no scheme of arrangement, except that some grown-up verses about childhood are brought together, and others having to do with babyhood are grouped near the end. Thanks are due the publishers of *Harper's Magazine*, *Everybody's*, *Life*, *Pictorial Review* and other friends, for permissions to reprint.

B. J.

Poughkeepsie, New York.

488753



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## **YOUNGSTERS**

*Slim woodland faun who stands upon the brink  
 Of that cool, unforgotten swimming-hole,  
 While spying, leaf-checked sunbeams seem to wink  
 A sly condonement of the hours you stole  
 From cramping seat and unrelenting book  
 In yon slave-laden galley known as school;  
 I note one backward, gay, defiant look  
 And then your shout ends gurgling in the pool.*

*I see you, boy, and standing closely by  
 I see a figure that you did not see—  
 A sprite with wind-blown hair and dancing eye,  
 Who leaped with you and laughed to find you free.  
 And while your gay companions, Wind and Sun,  
 Tousled your hair or peppered all your face  
 With tell-tale freckles when the game was done,  
 The sprite was near you in that grassy place.*

*Though you may leave me, lad I cherish so,  
 I bear no grudge because you draw away,  
 Save that you lure her with you as you go,  
 That mate you never saw, whose name was Play.  
 I know her now. Sometimes her laughing eyes  
 Shine kindly at me as she dances past.  
 No painted jade may trick me in her guise,  
 My heart so holds her image true and fast.*

*Departing boy, who trod that grassy place  
 Beside your well-remembered Lethe's pool  
 Which splashed so gaily when its glad embrace  
 Drowned every glooming thought of books and school,  
 I'll let you go ungrudging. Years unfold  
 Full compensations; dear lad, go your way,  
 If you'll but leave me some small rightful hold  
 On that gay sprite of yours whose name is Play.*

## WHAT'S THE USE?

What's the use o' growin' up?

You can't paddle with yer toes  
In a puddle—you can't *yell*  
When yer feelin' extra well—

Why every feller knows  
A grown-up can't let *loose*.  
I don't *want* to be no older—  
What's the use?

What's the use o' growin' up?

When I'm big I don't suppose  
Explorin' would be *right*  
In a neighbor's field at night—

I won't *like* to get my clo'se  
All watermelon juice.  
I don't want to be no older—  
What's the use?

What's the use o' growin' up?

*You* couldn't ride the cow,  
An' the rabbits an' the pig  
Don't like you 'cause yer big,

I'm *comfortablest* now—  
P'r'aps I *am* a goose.

WHAT'S THE USE?

I don't want to be no older—  
What's the use?

What's the use o' growin' up?  
When yer growed, why every day  
You just have to be *one thing*.  
*I'm* a pirate, er a king,  
Er a cowboy—I can play  
That I'm *anything I choose*.  
I don't want to be no older—  
What's the use?

## BEING GOOD

What 's the use of being good?

It aint really any fun;

And there 's no one ever knows,

'Cept my conscience, I suppose,

All the noble deeds I done;

And I feel so like a sham.

I don't want to be no gooder

Than I am.

What 's the use of being good?

If they notice it at all

They just pat me on the head,

Or they show me off, instead;

And the folks that come to call

Say "How cute!" and "Little lamb!"

I don't want to be no gooder

Than I am.

What 's the use of being good?

All the fun 's the other way—

All the mischief and the noise

And the pranks with other boys—

All the goodies hid away,

And your fingers in the jam!

I don't want to be no gooder

Than I am.





## DISPROVED

People tell me I must do  
All the growing that I can;  
For they say I'll soon be through—  
I won't grow when I'm a man.

That is why I'm fed so much  
Nasty stuff to make me grow,  
Tapioca, squash and such;  
But I don't believe it's so!

Daddy's old. *He* won't be fed  
Things for which he doesn't care.  
Yet I notice that his head  
Keeps on growing through his hair.

## A REGGERLER WRIGGLER

When you was as little as me, did you care  
If they made you stand still while they fooled with  
your hair,  
And combed it and brushed it and told you "There,  
there!"?

Nurse says, when she lays down the comb with a  
slam,  
I'm a reggerler wriggler,—maybe I am.

When I'm doing my lessons or eating my meals  
I have to be still as a mouse, till it feels  
As if I *must* pound on the floor with my heels.  
At church it is awful,—the folks all declare  
I'm a reggerler wriggler while I am there.

It is n't so easy, this trying to keep  
Quite still in the daytime,—it hurts me a heap.  
And they seem to forget that I'm still when I sleep.  
I think little boys who sit still are a sham;  
*I'm* a reggerler wriggler, that's what *I* am!

## LOSTED

I feel so far from anywheres!  
Perhaps my family  
Has got so many other cares  
They've all forgotted me.  
I s'pose I'll starve to skin an' bone  
If I stay losted here alone.

My little dog, he founded me,  
An' wagged his tail an' whined,  
But he can't lead me home, for he  
Is taught to walk behind.  
And so I'm crying yet, becuz  
I'm just as losted as I was.





## RUNNING AWAY FROM HOME

I was so certain yesterday  
It would be fun to run away;  
It never once occurred to me  
How dreadful lonesome it would be.  
And if this really is a cow  
I'll hurry home to mother now.



## WHEN I GET INTO BED

I'm never frightened in the dark,  
Though I am very small;  
I never sit all scared and hark  
For Ogres in the hall.  
But when my prayers are said  
I have one awful dread,  
That something waits to grab my toes  
When I get into bed!

I try to think of pleasant things  
Each time I get undressed;  
And how each day no evil brings  
If children do their best.

But the thought comes in my head,  
As I'm turning down the spread,  
That *something's* going to grab my toes  
As I get into bed.

And when there 's nothing more to do,  
With bedclothes open wide,  
It makes me shiver through and through  
A-trying to decide  
Which foot shall go ahead,  
'Cause I'm sure I'd tumble dead  
If something ever grabbed my toes  
As I get into bed.



## WHAT PUZZLES ME

There's something I'm *awfully* anxious to know,  
I think it's important as it can be—  
S'pose it had happened beforehand so  
That I was somebody else but me?  
Then some other boy would be your little boy,  
An' love you more than a tongue-can-tell;  
I wonder would he be his mother's-joy,  
An' smooth her headaches to make them well?  
—*'Cause I think it's funny as it can be,*  
*That you is you, an' me is me.*

I've worried and bothered for most a day,  
'Termining what I should ever do,  
If things were arranged in a different way,  
An' you should be somebody else but you.  
You'd live in some other place but here—  
Far away, maybe—but anyhow,  
I'm perfectly positive, Mother dear,  
I'd love you 'zactly as much as now.  
—*But I think it's funny as it can be,*  
*That you is you, an' me is me.*

If you was somebody else but you,  
P'r'aps we'd meet in the street some day,

An' I'd be p'lite an' say "Howdedo!"  
An' "What a *nice* little boy!" you'd say.  
Then we'd walk for almost a block, before  
I'd tell you just who I was—an' then—  
You wouldn't be somebody else anymore,  
An' I'd be your little boy again.  
—*An' I think it's funny as it can be,  
That you is you, an' me is me.*



## THE MONARCH

I am lord of the land and the sea,  
I am king of the jungle and cave;  
Wild animals cringe at my knee,  
And fish at my word swim the wave.

I fearlessly crawl 'neath the bed,  
Where teddy-bears lurk in the dark;  
Or I hunt the dim closet instead,  
Where roam all the beasts of the ark.

I am lord of the sea and the shore,  
On carnage I gaze unafraid;  
I shrink not at squeak or at roar,—  
I know how such noises are made.

## THE MONARCH

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I stride through my nursery domain,  
And the bathtubby ocean I scan;  
While faithfully march in my train  
Weird creatures of cotton and bran.

## SUPPLANTED

Seems zif everything nice is done  
Just for that newest kid.  
Once, when I was the youngest one,  
I never got spanked or chid.  
I've pricked his leg with a pin, for fun,—  
I'm awfully glad I did!

## SPRING TONICS

I love it when the folks begin  
To give us kids our medicine;  
I've tasted lots o' things that's worse.  
I'm oldest, so they feed me first,  
An' when it comes their turns then I  
Just yell an' dance an' make 'em cry!



## STRATEGIC

Whenever I am playing, and I want to rest a bit,  
I can't lie down a minute, or even stop to sit,  
But I hear a Grown-up say,  
"You're tired out at play!  
Come! Lay aside your little toys,—they'll do another day."

And so I have decided that I really can't afford  
To have 'em find me resting of my very own accord,  
'Cause some one comes along  
Who says "You are not strong,—  
You had n't oughta play so hard, it certainly is wrong."

That's why I keep a-skipping and a-running in and out  
Until I'm really certain that no Grown-ups are about;  
And then I slip away  
Just a minute from my play,  
And rest as hard as possible to last me through the day.

## GRACE

Dear Lord, bless my bread and meat,  
And everything I drink and eat,  
And let them make me well and strong  
To keep from ever doing wrong.  
I thank thee, Lord, each day again  
For guarding little boys. Amen.



## 'MEMBER?

'Member, awful long ago—  
Most a *million* weeks or so—  
How we tried to run away  
An' was gone for most a day?  
Your Pa found us both, and then  
Asked if we'd be bad again,  
An' we promised, by-um-by.  
Do you '*member*? So do I.

'Member when I tried to crawl  
Through that hole beneath your wall,  
An' I stuck becuz my head  
Was too big? Your Mother said,  
When she came to pull me through,  
S'prised *you* didn't try it too.  
An' you did it, by-um-by.  
'Member? *Do y'?* So do I.

'Member once, when you an' me  
Found your mother's pantry key?  
All the folks stayed out till late,  
An' we ate an' ate an' *ate!*





Ma was s'prised, so she confessed,  
That we didn't eat the rest.  
An' we *did* it, by-um-by.  
*Course* you 'member? So do I.

'Member when your Mother said  
'At she wisht I'd run an' do  
All the mischief in my head  
All at once an' get it through?  
S'pose we did, why maybe then  
We could do it all *again!*  
Guess we could if we should try.  
Will y' sometime? So'll I.

## EXCUSES

Sometimes when I'm special naughty  
In some bran'-new way,  
An' my sister an' the nurse  
Only get me actin' worse,  
Daddy's told, an' when I'm caught, he  
Asks what I've to say.

Daddy has some special uses  
For a slipper he  
Keeps upon his study shelf,  
So I start to 'scuse myself,  
An' I think up lots of 'scuses  
Quickly as can be!

Daddy coughs, an' then confesses  
That sometimes he does  
P'raps misjudge me by mistake,  
Then he gives my hand a shake.  
(But I sometimes think he guesses  
Just how bad I was!)



## GOOD HUNTING

Table-leg Jungle is dark and still,  
There 's snakes in the Carpet Glade,  
And lions and tigers on Sofa Hill,  
But I'm never a bit afraid.  
My dog, I know, is a trusty brute,  
And I've got a gun that 'll really shoot.

Once there was Indians under the bed,  
But I hunted 'em all away;  
There 's elephants hiding there now instead—  
They're perfectly safe to-day,  
'Cause I'm near the cavern of Easy-Chair,  
And I scent the track of a Teddy Bear!

If I was like nurse or like baby Sis,  
What never has fired a gun,  
I guess I would n't be brave as this!  
They'd both of 'em cry and run.  
But I'll stalk him down and I'll shoot him through,  
And I'll make him into a Teddy-stew.

## A DIFFERENCE

Whenever I can't go to sleep  
    Though I have said my prayers and all,  
Around the room queer noises creep  
And lights and shadows dance and leap  
    Above me on the wall.

The dark gets full of dreadful things  
    That tiptoe round and round my bed—  
I hear the rustling of wings  
And little creaks and whisperings—  
    I dassent turn my head.

But when there sounds upon the stair  
    My mother's footstep, drawing near,  
The dark just turns to empty air—  
And all around there's nothing there  
    To cause a bit of fear.

Then I imagine, one by one,  
    The things that scare me most of all;  
They make the little shivers run  
Along my back. It's lots of fun—  
    *While mother's in the hall!*



## IN THE SWING

I love to swing so high, so high,  
That all the world is turned around;  
My feet are standing on the sky,  
And far above me is the ground.

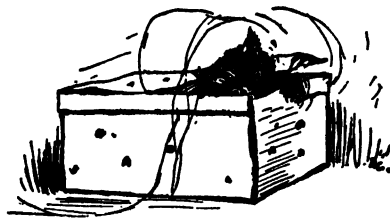
I love to swing so high, and see  
The leafy boughs go rushing by,  
And view the world beyond the tree,  
With nothing near me but the sky.

Up, up I go,—and hardly stir  
For one long happy second; then  
With a delicious rush and whirr  
The world turns right side up again.

## NO TRAVELER

I 'd love to ride on railroads every day  
And sit up by the window,—would n't you?  
To watch the world all rush the other way  
And make believe where it is running to.  
But once—it was n't far—  
I took kitty on a car,  
And I guess there 's lots of other things a cat 'd  
rather do.

A kitty does n't care about the view,  
And she 's frightened by the jiggle of the floor;  
It makes you feel ashamed to have her mew,  
But she's stronger'n she ever was before!  
Though traveling is fun,  
With almost any one,  
I never want to travel with a kitty any more.



## WAS YOU EVER SPANKED?

Was *you* ever spanked? I ain't sorry a bit  
I scratched at my brother an' hollered an' spit.  
Then they pulled me away, an' I kicked an' I yanked.  
Was *you* ever spanked?

Was *you* ever spanked? The times I've been good,  
Why, nobody's cared, an' I ain't understood.  
If I die, they have only themselves to be thanked!  
Was *you* ever spanked?



### THE ANXIOUS FARMER

It was awful long ago  
That I put those seeds around;  
And I guess I ought to know  
When I stuck 'em in the ground.  
'Cause I noted down the day  
In a little diary book,—  
It 's gotten losted somewheres and  
I don't know where to look.

But I 'm certain anyhow  
They 've been planted most a week;  
And it must be time by now  
For their little sprouts to peek.  
They 've been watered every day  
With a very speshul care,  
And once or twice I've dug 'em up  
To see if they was there.

I fixed the dirt in humps  
Just the way they said I should;  
And I crumbled all the lumps  
Just as finely as I could.  
And I found a nangle-worm  
A-poking up his head,—  
He maybe feeds on seeds and such,  
And so I squashed him dead.

A seed 's so very small,  
And dirt all looks the same;—  
How can they know at all  
The way they ought to aim?  
And so I 'm waiting round  
In case of any need;  
A farmer ought to do his best  
For every single seed!

## WISDOM

Often when I want to talk, grown-ups say I oughtn't,  
For they think what I would say cannot be important.  
I am told that when I'm grown, then I may be bolder,  
Wisdom will be in my head when I've gotten older.  
Tell me, will it, when it comes, set my head a-hum-  
ming?

But I mostly want to know—will I feel it coming?



## COWS

Who 's afraid of a cow?  
They 're so gentle and kind  
You can go up quite close  
And they none of 'em mind;  
And they like little girls, so I 've heard people  
say—  
But I wish, O I wish they was further away!

Pooh—who 's afraid?  
They 're as good as can be,  
An' one 's a child-cow that is younger than me.  
They give us good milk—an' there 's nothing to  
fear—  
But I wish, O I wish that my Daddy was here!

## THE PUPPY CLASS

I tell them all that A 's for APPETITE  
And B 's a BONE, and C 's a Pussy CAT,  
And though they do not pay attention quite  
The way they should, I think they growled at that.  
They 've been to school all day there on the mat,  
And yet they will not learn their letters right;  
Their little tummies are so very fat  
I fear their brains are crowded just a mite.

I cannot make them consecrate their thought,  
Not even though I scold them some, and frown.  
They don't get half the discipline they ought,  
Their eyes are so affectionate and brown!  
I don't believe that scholars *can* be taught  
Who lick your face and bark and tumble down.



## WITH SISTER'S DOLLS

Dolls are silly things to play with,  
There 's so much a boy *prefers*;  
But at times I have to stay with  
Sister when she tends to hers.

And besides I often find her,  
(For you know how young she is!)  
Needing some one to remind her  
Of her 'sponsibilities.

*Anne and Lucy, Tot and Ted,  
Do you dollies s'pose  
That it 's right to go to bed  
Wearing all your clo'se?  
Your Mamma 's too young, I s'pect,  
To be scolded for neglect!*

I 'm a year and one month older  
Than my sister is, and she  
Can't expect (so Mother 's told her)  
To sit up as late as me.  
So each night, when she is sleeping,  
It 's my duty for awhile  
Just to see if she is keeping  
All her dolls in proper style.

*Anne and Lucy, Tot and Ted,  
Listen here to me!  
Every night you go to bed  
Wicked as can be.  
Don't you s'pose that Someone cares  
If you never say your prayers?*



## THE DOG'S TURN

They 're at me all the day,  
There 's not an hour between!  
I have no time for play—  
I think they 're very mean.  
For every minute 's taken up in being gotten  
clean.

They wash and clean and scrub,  
Although I 've clothes to wear;  
All day they comb and rub,  
And brush my teeth and hair.  
At five o'clock I have a bath while grown  
folks come and stare.

## THE DOG'S TURN

41

Now, Petel Don't leave this spot  
Until I 've gotten through.  
The things that hurt a lot  
Are what is best for you—  
I guess what 's good for baby boys is good  
for doggies too.

## THE EAVESDROPPER

If little boys don't hurry off to bed  
On Christmas eve, an' try to go sleep,  
But stay awake an' hide around an' peep  
(Er so the grown-up folks have always said),  
Then Santa Claus 'll frown an' shake his head,  
An' gather all their presents in a heap—  
Espeshully the ones they 'd wanta keep—  
An' give 'em all to other boys instead.

But every year I 've wanted so to see!  
An' maybe he 'll not find me hiding here.  
But if he *did*, an' left no toys for me,  
I 'd be ez glad I peeked—er pretty near.  
Unless he was so cross that maybe he  
Would take away the things he left last year!



## MY LITTLE DOG AND ME

My little dog knows just as much  
As lots of people do.  
He can't do sums, er three times three,  
Er read er write like you an' me,—  
But what 's the use of sums an' such  
I never really knew.

Of course he ain't a cherabim,—  
He 's playful as can be!  
He don't shut doors er wipe his feet,  
An' maybe he 's not always neat;  
But people that don't care fer him  
Don't hafter care fer me.

## PUTTING DOLLY TO BED

A mother has so many cares  
    There 's little time to play.  
She 's combing out the snarly hairs,  
Or darning holes or mending tears,  
Or kissing hurts or soothing scares  
    All through the live-long day.

But I and mother often say,  
    Though tiring duties heap  
Upon our shoulders as they may,  
The nicest duty of the day  
Is when we 've put the toys away  
    And rock our babes to sleep.

## DUTY CALL

On Sundays I jus' love to dine  
With Aunty Jane an' Emeline,  
An' stay t' hear a temp'rance trac'.  
I love it, 'cause when I get back  
My muvver says, "Poor little sweet!"  
An' gives me heaps o' things to eat.



## PRAYERS

When it is bedtime, every day,  
I show my children how to pray;  
I never scold or even frown  
Whenever any tumble down,  
But I am patient as can be  
And make them copy after me.  
Their prayers are very short indeed—  
There is so little that they need.



## A FABLE

Said a Little Boy to a Honey Bee,  
"You'd not be happy if you was me!  
'Cause *I* don't get enough time to play—  
I can't do *half* what I want, all day.  
You stay where it's sunny, all chock full of  
honey—  
It must be funny to live that way.  
You have a *lot* better time than me!"  
Said the Little Boy to the Honey Bee.

Said the Honey Bee to the Little Boy,  
"Yes, life is jolly and full of joy!  
I hum and bumble and buzz away,  
But it's mostly work and it's seldom play,  
And, rainy or sunny, I toiled for the honey  
Which you (how funny!) ate up to-day.  
I don't know why, but I buzz with joy!"  
Said the Honey Bee to the Little Boy.



## A LITTLE GIRL AND A PUSSY-CAT

Said a little girl to a pussy-cat:

“It ’s jolly to make you play!

How soft you purr when I stroke your fur,

And your claws are all tucked away!

I love you ever so much for that,”

Said a little girl to a pussy-cat.

“But oh, there ’s a terrible thing I ’ve heard,

That brings great sorrow to me:

You killed a poor little baby bird

That lived in our apple-tree.

You can’t be dear to me, after that,”

Said a little girl to a pussy-cat.

## A LITTLE GIRL AND A PUSSY-CAT 49

"O little maid," said the pussy-cat,  
"You are gentle and kind, they say,  
To bird and beast, but did n't *you* feast  
On chicken for lunch to-day?  
And are n't there feathers upon your hat,  
O little maid?" said the pussy-cat.

"Oh, I 'll be I, and you 'll be you,  
As long as this world shall be.  
If you 'll be as good as you can for you,  
I 'll try to be good for me.  
So let 's be friends and agree to that,  
O little maid!" said the pussy-cat.

## MOTHER'S DAY OUT

When I was quite a little boy  
I learned to put myself to bed;  
I put away each book and toy,—  
'T was such a help, my mother said.  
And now I never even mind  
The clothes that button up behind.

Since I was six I 've grown so large  
That days when mother needs a rest  
She puts small sister in my charge,  
And I can get her all undressed.  
I even hear her say her prayers,  
And no one needs to come upstairs.

When mother has a lot to do  
On any morning, if I choose  
Then I can dress my sister, too,  
And even button up her shoes.  
I 'm always such a help, you see,  
My mother 's very proud of me.

## BEDTIME STORIES

All the very nicest things  
In the stories grandma told,  
All the giant-killers bold,  
All the fairy folk with wings,  
Some in prose and some in rhyme,  
Happened "Once-upon-a-time."

And I wished with all my heart  
Once-upon-a-time was now!  
For I made a solemn vow  
I'd have taken mighty part  
In those deeds of prose and rhyme,  
Of that once-upon-a-time.



## TEA-PARTIES

I should enjoy, if I was let,  
Tea-parties nearly ev'ry day.  
It is the nicest kind of play—  
With dishes from the kitchen set,  
And all the cookies we can get,  
And tea that 's made the cambric way.  
I usurally like to stay  
Until the food has all been et.  
And then, although I 'm really glad  
To leave, it 's more polite, you know,  
To say: My dear, it makes me sad,  
But I must call my dolls and go."  
(I 'm glad my manners are n't as bad  
As those of other girls I know!)

## CHRISTMAS MORNING

Yesterday I tore some lace—stuck my finger through  
it;

Day before I made a face—no one saw me do it.

Once I splattered with the ink—got my dress all  
spotted,

And there 's other things I think that I have for-  
gotted.

Do you s'pose HE came last night? I was always  
taught he

Would n't bring a single mite to a child that 's  
naughty!

But I guess if Santy's house has some children in it,  
They 're not quiet as a mouse every single minute.

And I guess that Mrs. Claus told him, if he let her,  
Not to blame this child, because his are n't any  
better!





## THE CHERUB

If that 's a cherub, I don't see why  
They ever should call me one:  
My face ain't round like an apple pie,  
An' I have n't a couple of wings to fly,  
But legs that 'll jump an' run.  
If that 's a cherub, it seems to me,  
There 's nicer things that a boy could be.

If cherubs are really made just so,  
Then how can they ever play?  
There is n't a place but clouds to go,  
Or just keep fluttering to and fro,  
Or stand on their chins all day.  
I s'pose it 's easy to soil a cloud,  
And people with feet are not allowed.

If I was really a cherub, though,  
'T would be sort of fun to fly.  
And parents would n't keep teasing so  
If I 'd been out in the rain or snow,  
To see if my feet was dry.  
'And if I ate loads of pie and cake,  
Then all outdoors could have stomach ache.

## FICKLE

New dolly, you are very sweet!  
With lips, an' teeth, an' truly hair!  
And you can bend your hands an' feet,  
Instead of sprawling here an' there.  
And you can close your eyes up tight,  
Instead of staring, day an' night.

I am so very proud of you  
I know now just how mother feels,  
When I am dressed my nicest, too,  
And there is company to meals.  
Us mothers take a lot of pride  
In pretty children at our side.

I think I 'll call you Anna Belle,—  
You must n't let it make you vain,—  
Or maybe you are Lady Nell;  
My rag-doll's name was only Jane.  
I hope she won't feel bad, but—well—  
I re'lize, now, that she was plain.



## CLOCKS

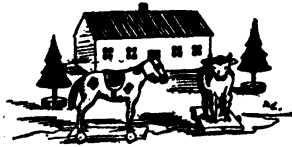
The clock I go to bed by is so very wee and small,  
The big hand gets around it in almost no time at all;  
And after tea, when bedtime is half a nouri away,  
The little minutes on it are the shortest in the day.

I wish that little bedtime clock was hanging here  
instead,  
And then they 'd use this kitchen clock for sending  
me to bed.  
When I 'm waiting for my luncheon, it 's so terribly  
slow;  
It has the biggest minutes of 'most any clock I know.

## AMBITION

I've shod my horse and fed my cow,  
And I am mending houses now;  
I think I'll be, when I am old,  
A farmer or a blacksmith bold.  
Unless I find that I prefer  
To be sometimes a carpenter.

I've learned so much, though I am small,  
Perhaps I'll grow to be them all.



## RESPONSIBILITIES

I've learned to say my evening prayers  
While nurse is waiting in the hall;  
I have so many heavy cares  
I like to think about them all.

I tell what mischief I've been in,  
And every night I never fail  
To tell all little brother's sin,  
And no one calls me "tattle tale."



## SOAP BUBBLES

If I knew magic, and could do  
Just anything I wanted to,  
I'd blow a bubble strong and wide  
Enough for me to get inside.

We'd sail far up into the blue,  
And when it burst and went away,  
I'd visit—for a day or two—  
The place where vanished bubbles play.

## A MOTHER'S HOPES

Sometimes my mother confesses,  
If she smiles when she's making my clo'se,  
That she's sewing fond hopes in my dresses,  
And weaving sweet dreams as she sews.

And so, when I'm stitching and mending,  
And all my doll's dresses I sew,  
I smile to myself while pretending  
The things they will do when they grow.



## IRONING DAY

I don't see why the grown-ups care  
Each time they find a rip or tear,  
And seem to feel so badly, just  
Because my clothes get soiled and mussed.

My children keep *too* clean and neat,—  
And dirty dollies are a treat.  
I find it quite the nicest play  
To wash and iron every day.



## INCORRIGIBLE

I guess I'm bad as I can be,  
    'Cause after uncle found and yanked me  
Out of that old apple-tree,  
    And after dad came home and spanked me,  
And while my teacher told me things  
    About the narrow path of duty,  
And how an education brings  
    The only truly joy and beauty,  
And while she said she didn't doubt  
    They'd wasted all the good they'd taught me,  
I had to grin, to think about  
    The fun I had before they caught me.

## TAKING BROTHER'S PICTURE

He felt quite miser'ble, I know,  
Dressed in his Sunday best;  
They pinched his head and sat him so  
He was uncomfyest.  
And then that silly picture-man  
Said "Look as pleasant as you can!"

## THE FISHERMAN

I've sittid here for days and days  
And haven't caught a thing;  
I've tried a lot of diff'rent ways  
Of jiggling the string,  
I've held the pole as still and firm  
As anyone could wish.  
I don't believe my angle worm  
Has seen a single fish!



## THE OCCASIONAL ANGUISH OF BEDTIME

When it is sister's party night,  
It's hard to have to go  
Straight off to bed. It isn't right!  
You'd think they ought to know,  
Or maybe no one loves us, and  
That's why they treat us so.

## EVENING IN THE PANTRY

It's lots more fun to eat a pie  
When grown-ups are not sitting by;  
And jam and tarts and all such stuff,—  
Then you can really eat enough.  
But we're afraid there's much too few  
For now and for to-morrow too!





## HIS FIRST AFFAIR

I told Eliza Mary Ann  
We'd marry when I was a man.  
I told her just how glad she'd be  
To marry such a man as me.  
But now we've quarrelled, guess that I  
Will go to war, and maybe die.





### A RAINY PICNIC DAY

It's raining—raining hard as cats and dogs,  
It always did when days we planned for came.  
I wish that we were ducks or little frogs,  
Then we could have our picnic just the same.  
It seems zif little children's pleasure days  
Could be put off in such a lot of ways.

## PLAYING DOCTOR

Some day I'll be a doctor-man,  
So now I practise all I can.  
We caught the cat, and Rover, too,  
And tried to act as doctors do.  
But baby howled and spoiled it all,  
By bringing Aunty from the hall.

## THE RIDER

We've rode a thousand miles or more,  
My horse and I, across the floor.  
And when I've gone another mile  
I'll maybe let him rest awhile.

My mother thinks this horse by far  
The best of all the steeds there are;  
For though I gallop all the day  
I don't get *very* far away.

## PLAYING IN THE BARN

The barn's the nicest place to play:  
I guess 'twas meant for little boys.  
You shout and tumble in the hay,  
With nobody to mind the noise.  
And there's an awful dang'rous swing  
That flies as high as anything!



## OMNISCIENCE

I've been to school at least a hundred days  
Or maybe more;  
My brother, he just stays at home and plays,—  
He's only four.

I'm old. I know that gnomes and elves and such  
Are just a fraud.  
There's no one 'cept my daddy knows so much,  
And, maybe, God.

## SPEAKING THE FIRST PIECE

It's hard, when I'm dressed up so nice,  
And have my piece so well prepared,  
To have them sit as still as mice,  
And know that I am getting scared.  
You can't expect a child like me  
To know her pieces perfectly.



## SPRINKLING THE BABY

My mother says I'm much too small  
To have a garden of my own.  
She says I take no pains at all  
To tend my plants, from spring to fall;  
That's why they haven't grown.  
She says they can't get tall and strong  
Unless they're watered right along.

I want to let my mother know  
That I can truly do a lot.  
I'm big enough to help, and so  
I'm making baby sister grow,—  
She's such a tiny tot.  
And things won't grow, the folks all say,  
Unless they're watered every day.



## MOTHER WANTS ME

Tell me what time it is, wise little flower!

Answer me truthfully, now when I blow.

Off goes your bonnet to show me the hour,

All your white feathers go flying like snow.

Off goes your bonnet—and plainly you say,

“Mother is wanting you, hurry away!”

Mother is wanting me, so I must run,

But there's so much in this garden to do!

Not more than half of my playing done.

Why did I ever ask questions of *you*?



## BALLADE OF THE LITTLE THINGS THAT COUNT

The furrow's long behind my plow—  
My field is strewn with stones of care,  
And trouble gathers thick enow  
As years add silver to my hair.  
Could I an easier path prepare  
For baby feet that start to mount?—  
Save them a bit of wear and tear,—  
And show the little things that count?

I see a tiny maiden bow  
O'er slate and pencil, in her chair:  
A little pucker on her brow,  
A little tousle in her hair.  
And one wee tear has fallen where  
The crooked figures grin and flout;  
My heart goes reaching to her there—  
I love the little things that count!

Arithmetic is such a slough—  
A pilgrim's swamp of dull despair,  
But Discipline will not allow  
My hand to point a thoro'fare.  
Harsh figures face us everywhere,

LITTLE THINGS THAT COUNT 79

O'erwhelming in their vast amount;  
Must she so soon their burden bear?—  
I love the little things that count!

Stern Teacher, must she ever fare  
Alone to Learning's chilly fount?  
There is so much I long to share—  
I *love* the Little Things That Count!

## ENVY

There are lizards in the pool,  
Pollywogs and fishes fleet;  
Swimming where it's wet and cool,  
Finding tiny things to eat.  
They don't have to go to school,  
They can always wet their feet.  
P'raps it gives them extra joy  
'Cause they're not a little boy.



## IN SLUMBERLAND

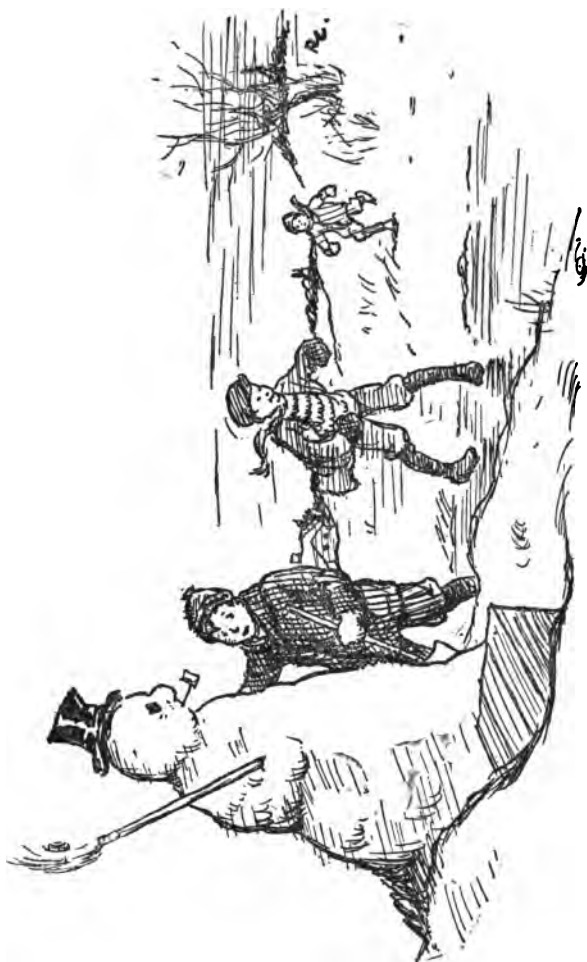
Where is the road to Slumberland?  
Just rest your cheek upon your hand,  
And press your pillow hard, and say  
Good-night to all the world of Day;  
Breathe deep—and, presto! you will stand  
Upon the shores of Slumberland.

All sounds are songs in Slumberland—  
The rhyme of waves upon the sand,  
The whisp'ring boughs, the droning breeze,  
And dreams are blossoming on the trees;  
They only wait your gathering hand,  
Wee visitor to Slumberland.

And all you meet in Slumberland  
Obedient and expectant stand;  
The birds and beasts, the gnomes and elves,  
The sun and moon and stars themselves,  
All wait to heed your least command,  
While You are king in Slumberland.

## IN WINTER TIME

The winter time is extra nice—  
We run and slide upon the ice,  
Or build a snow-man, fat and tall;  
But coasting is the best of all.  
The baby is so soft and plump  
We put him first, in case we bump.





## WHERE DREAMS ARE MADE

Dreams are made in the moon, my dear,  
On her shining hillsides steep;  
Pleasant and dreadful and gay and queer,  
They're piled in a silver heap.  
And many fairies with buzzing wings  
Are busy with hammers and wheels and things,  
Making the dreams that Night-time brings  
To all little boys asleep.

And if a boy has been good till night,  
When snug in his bed he lies  
The fairies come with a moonbeam bright  
And slide him up to the skies.  
And there he sails as the Moon-king's guest,  
And chooses the dreams he likes the best;  
Then they slide him back to his nurs'ry nest  
And leave him rubbing his eyes.



## THE SPY

Yesterday mother she spanked me so hard,  
I sort of keep feeling it now;  
For somehow she learned, when I hid in the yard,  
That I'd done what she didn't allow.  
I asked how she knew that I'd gone and been bad,  
And she said that a little bird told her I had.

It's always some bird that has tattled before,  
And helped grown-up folks to find out;  
And now when I've just shut the jam-closet door  
I find *you* a-hopping about!  
And if you're the bird that's been doing all that,  
I'll find where you live, an' I'll tell my old cat.



## PICTURE BOOKS

All the world is freshly tinted  
For the eyes of each new child;  
For his joy new sunbeams glinted,  
Castle-clouds were reared and piled.  
Nature, spreading arts unstinted,  
Was rewarded when he smiled.

All the lore of all the ages,  
Colors stolen from the skies,  
Wrought by painters, poets, sages,  
Have attained their richest prize  
If on oft-read, thumb-worn pages  
They delight the children's eyes.



## THE TOY SOLDIERS

Sleep on, Little Boy, and sleep secure—  
All day you have played so hard!  
Your little feet that have romped and strayed,  
Your head that has planned the games we played,  
May rest, while we all keep guard.

Sleep on, Little Boy, your rest is sure—  
What though we are battle-scarred;  
The love you've lavished on us all day  
Will more than do for a soldier's pay!  
Sleep, then, for we all keep guard.

## THE WEATHER MAN

Watchman, tell us of the day,—  
Is it fit for noble deeds?  
Does it call you to the fray?  
Or the sort of morn that breeds  
Poet-thoughts along the way?

Watchman, do you gaze upon  
Skies of hope, or clouds of doubt?  
Faint the answer came, anon—  
“Mother says I can’t go out  
’Less I put my rubbers on.”

## THE PLAYMATE

I barked beneath his window, "Come and play!"  
I scratched so lightly at his nursery door.  
I whimpered softly in the passageway—  
He never failed to answer me before.

I've saved the willow whip his fingers peeled;  
The stick he used to throw is by the pool;  
The butterflies are waiting in the field  
Beside the grassy path that led to school.

It is so long since last we romped and ran.  
How proud I was to guard his door of late!  
I've called to him in every way I can.  
There's nothing left to do but wait—and wait.



## BABY JOHN

The lazy sun is yawning, as it hides behind the town,  
For the Sleepy-Time is at hand;  
And cozy beds are calling, as the sun goes creeping  
down,  
To each little boy in the land.  
The organ-man is drowsy as he wanders down the  
street;  
The leaves are asleep on the tree;  
And the horses and the wagons and the little dogs  
you meet  
Are as sleepy as they can be.

*Your bed is calling to you, little John, Baby John!  
There's a sleepy chair beside it to hang your clothes  
upon.  
And I hear the cool sheets saying, "What means this  
long delaying?  
It is time you stopped your playing, Baby John!"*

The chairs are all so tired that to use them is a sin,  
While the floor is asleep, no doubt,  
And the carpets are the bedclothes that snugly tuck  
it in—

You'll wake it if you run about!  
I heard the cuckoo calling from the big clock in the  
hall—

“Hurry up, little John!” it said;  
And the little clock is ticking, half asleep against  
the wall,  
“Go to bed! Go to bed! Go to bed!”

*Your bed is calling to you, little John, Baby John!  
There's a crinkley white pillow to rest your head  
upon.*

*And the little dreams come creeping, I can see them  
slyly peeping  
To see if you are sleeping, Baby John.*



## THE FIRST HAIR CUT

Jimmy's had a hair cut!  
How the folks all stare.  
It's so short you see his skin  
Showing through his hair.  
'T wasn't like he'd had before,  
Cut around a bowl;  
It was in that barber-store  
By the candy pole.

Jimmy's had a hair cut!  
We was there to see,  
Peeking through the window-pane,—  
All the boys and me.



## THE FIRST HAIR CUT

He looked worried there alone,  
Trying hard to grin,  
On a kind of great big throne  
Wrapped up to his chin.

Jimmy's had a hair cut!  
'Course it scared him some.  
All those shears and cups and things  
Sort of struck him dumb.  
My, I wished that I was him  
Sitting there instead  
Looking like a cherubim,  
Showing just my head.

Wish I'd had my hair cut  
By a shiney man,  
Telling grown-up jokes and such  
While his snippers ran.  
Jimmy's mother saved a curl,—  
She feels bad, I know,  
That he wasn't born a girl  
And could let them grow.

Jimmy's had a hair cut,—  
My! It made him proud!  
Walking out, while all of us  
Followed in a crowd.

He got pretty rich that day  
    'Fore he went to bed,  
Making every fellow pay  
    Just to smell his head.



### GOIN' BAREFOOT

It's more fun goin' barefoot than anythin' I know.  
There ain't another *single* thing that helps yer feel-  
in's so.

Some days I stay in Muvver's room a-gettin' in her  
way,

An' when I've bothered her so much she sez, "Oh  
run and play,"

I say, "Kin I go barefoot?" En she sez, "If y'  
choose;"

Nen I alwuz wanter holler when I'm pullin' off my  
shoes!

It's fun a-goin' barefoot when yer playin' any game,  
'Cause robbers would be noisy an' Indians awful  
tame

Unless they had their shoes off when they crep' up, in  
th' night,

*An' folks can't know they're comin' till they get right  
close in sight!*

An' I'm surely goin' barefoot every day when I get  
old

An' haven't got a nurse to say I'll catch my detho-  
cold!

An' if yer goin' barefoot yer want t' go outdoors—  
Y' can't stretch out an' dig yer heels in stupid hard-  
wood floors

Like you kin dig 'em in th' dirt. An' where th' long  
grass grows

The blades feel kinder tickly an' cool between yer  
toes.

So when I'm pullin' off my shoes I'm mighty 'fraid  
I'll cough,

'Cause then I know Ma'd stop me 'fore I got my  
stockin's off!

If y' often go 'round barefoot there's lots o' things  
to know,

Of how t' curl yer feet on stones so they won't hurt  
y' so,

An' when th' grass is stickly and pricks y' at a touch,  
Jes' plunk your feet down solid an' it don't hurt half  
so much.

I lose my hat mos' every day. I wish I did my  
shoes—

Er else I wisht I was so poor I hadn't none t' lose!

## COOKIN' THINGS

When my mother's cookin' things,  
You bet I never wait  
To put away my ball er gun,  
I drop 'em where they are an' run  
Fer fear I'll be too late.  
The most excitin' kind of game,  
Er toy, er story-book,  
I let 'em go, an' never mind,  
The very minute that I find  
My mother's goin' to cook!

When my mother's cookin' things,  
Then you just oughter smell  
The spices an' the sweets an' such,  
My mouth gets waterin' so much  
I almost have to yell!  
She opens up the oven door  
Sometimes, to take a look,  
An' then I jab 'em while they're hot,  
To see if they are done er not,  
When mother lets me cook.

When my mother's cookin' things,  
P'r'aps it's pies to bake,  
Er doughnuts bobbin' up an' down  
In boilin' grease till they are brown,  
Er p'r'aps it's johnny-cake.

## COOKIN' THINGS

Whatever kind of thing it is,  
I always like to hook  
The biggest piece of dough I can  
An' bake it in a patty-pan,  
When me an' mother cook.

When my mother's cookin' things,  
It pays you if you wait  
An' eat 'em hot, right off the tin,  
It's twice as good as anythin'  
Could be, et off a plate!  
'An' I guess *you'd* find out fer sure  
That I was not mistook  
In any single thin' I've said,  
If you could taste the gingerbread  
I've helped my mother cook.



## INTERRUPTING

They say it's wrong to interrupt when someone talks  
to you,

But I don't do it near as much as grown-up people do;  
For while I'm telling Mother some important piece  
of news

She is counting up my buttons or examining my shoes.  
And just when I have gotten to the most exciting part,  
And she ought to pay attention to my words with all  
her heart,

All at once she says, "Come here!

I very greatly fear

A button's coming off your clothes, and I must fix it,  
dear."

It's just the same with Father,—he's no better, I'm  
afraid.

I always want him to admire important things I've  
made.

But when I start to show him, so that he will under-  
stand

Where I nailed it or I sawed it, and just how I  
worked and planned,



He'll nod his head, and say "Indeed!" in an attentive way,  
And act as if he saw it, but then like as not he'll say,  
Just when I've got a-going,  
"My boy, your nose needs blowing;"  
Which proves he doesn't hear, nor even look at what  
I'm showing.



### BEIN' SICK

When I am *really* sick abed  
It isn't ever any fun.  
I feel all achey in my head  
An' hate to take my medisun.  
Th' sheets get stickyish and hot,  
But I am not allowed to kick  
'Em off, er read, er talk a lot  
When I am sick.

I hate fer all th' folks about  
To come an' pat me on th' face  
An' say, "Poor child, you'll soon be out,"  
An' tiptoe all around th' place.  
They go when I pertend to be  
Asleep—I do it fer a trick:  
I don't like folks to pity me  
When I am sick.

My mother's diff'runt—I don't care  
If she sits by me once er twice  
An' says, "Poor boy," an' smooths my  
hair;  
She ain't just tryin' to be nice.  
They bring warm squushy things to me  
Fer meals, an' make me eat 'em quick.  
I'm mis'ruble as I can be  
When I am sick.

## GETTIN' WELL

When yer really sick abed  
All th' fun is getting well.  
Say! It's jolly bein' fed—  
I kin hardly ever tell  
What tastes best. 'Most any food  
Goes so fast I want'er lick  
Th' plate. Stuff always tastes so good  
When I've been sick.

I like it best when I can sit  
All bundled in th' easy chair,  
With all th' windows raised a bit  
To give th' place a little air.  
An' if a breeze comes now an' then,  
I tell y' what, it's pretty slick  
Just t' *smell* outdoors again  
When I've been sick!

They put th' kittens on th' rug,  
An' mother brings her sewin' in,  
An' everythin's so nice an' snug  
I sit an' look around an' grin.

An' then I get to countin' sneep,  
Or wond'rin why th' clock should tick  
In diff'runt ways. I like t' sleep  
When I've been sick.



## SOAP, THE OPPRESSOR

The folks at my house half the time are thinkin'  
about dirt;  
It sort of gives 'em horrors, an' they act as if it hurt.  
The sight of just a little makes 'em daffy as can be—  
They're always washin' sumthin', an' half the time  
it's me.

It ain't because I wet my feet that gives me colds an'  
such;  
'Tain't runnin' round that keeps me thin—it's 'cause  
I'm washed so much.  
It does no good to tell 'em, they're so stubborn. But  
I hope  
That some day they'll discover what deceitful stuff is  
soap.

I tell you, very often when my hands was clean and  
white  
I've gone along to wash 'em, 'cause it did no good to  
fight.  
When I've stuck 'em in the basin it was plain enough  
to see  
The soap would make the water as dirty as could be.

If folks would give me half a chance, with soap that  
    didn't cheat,  
I guess they'd be surprised to find I'm nachurally  
    neat.  
I'd take on flesh and leave off havin' colds an' such,  
    I know,—  
An' no one could complain about the parts of me that  
    show.



## BED-TIME

Last year my bed-time was at eight,  
And every single night  
I used to wish the clock would wait,  
Or else stay out of sight.  
It always seemed to me  
The next half-hour'd be  
The nicest time of all the day  
If mother would agree.  
But she always shook her head  
And she sort of jumped, and said,  
'Why, it's late—after eight—  
And it's time you were in bed!'

That clock would always do its best  
To sit all quiet there,  
Until I was my comfiest  
In some big easy chair.



## BED-TIME

Then its striking would begin,  
And I'd tell my Motherkin  
How I'd just begun a chapter,  
    And it was *so int'restin'*—  
And the end was just ahead—  
But she *usurully* said,  
    “No; it's late—after eight—  
And it's time to go to bed!”

And now my bed-time is ha-past,—  
    But yet that old clock does  
The same mean tricks—it's just as fast,  
    Or faster, than it was.  
Last night it seemed to me  
The *next* half-hour 'd be  
The nicest time of all the day  
    If mother would agree.  
But she smiled and shook her head,  
And she kissed me while she said,  
    “Why, it's late—ha-past eight—  
And it's time you went to bed!”

## SUPERSTISHUS

Onct I went a-fishin' with a man what had a reel.  
An' fancy hooks an' catgut an' a fish-pole made o'  
steel;

He never got a single bite from early until late,  
Just 'cuz he didn't take no stock in spittin' on th' bait.  
Yes, he can laff an' jeer, *but where's his fish, I'd like  
ter know?*

Oh, I guess lots o' things is true 'at some folks say  
ain't so!

D'jever drop a horse-hair into th' wat'rin'-trough  
An' leave it there fer weeks an' weeks 'thout drainin'  
of it off?

An' ef you use a human hair they say it only takes  
Jes' half as long—but anyhow, *it turns 'em into  
snakes!*

An' ef a feller don't believe a half the things he hears  
A darnin' needle comes along an' sews up both his  
ears!

Our cook, she's *superstishus*—she's scared as anythin'  
If someone spills a little salt er don't pick up a pin.

An' when I wuz a kid I'd walk down to th' gate an'  
back,  
An' think that I wuz poisoned if my foot stepped on  
a crack!  
I know *them* things is silly—I cross my heart I do—  
But I guess lots o' things is so 'at some folks never  
knew!

## BABIES

A baby is so queer, you know,  
I think, each new one that I see,  
It isn't possible he'll grow  
To be as fine a boy as me.



## ILLOGICAL

They're as proud as they can be  
Every time the baby squeaks;  
When she gets as big as me  
Bet they'll scold her if she speaks!

'Cause some visitor, perhaps,  
When I try to say a word,  
Laughs an' says that little chaps  
Should be seen instead of heard.

If that's truly what they mean,  
Seems to me it wasn't wise,  
If they meant me to be seen,  
Not to make me bigger size.

An' if I can't talk so much,  
Why did God, who had his choice  
Of materials an' such,  
Make me have so big a voice?



## THE BUTTERFLY

It's just a monstrous ant with paper wings.

I think I won't disturb it where it stands!

It never buzzes and it never sings.—

I wonder which is feet and which is hands?

I don't see what it's good for, anyway.

It never does a thing but stand and flutter;

I've followed it around for half the day

And haven't seen it make a bit of butter.

## RAIN-CHARM

*Rain, rain, go away; come again another day,  
Little Billie wants to play!*

What's the reason, do you s'pose, that it has to rain?  
I've been flattenin' my nose up against th' pane  
For about an hour or so, beggin' for th' rain to go.

In th' attic it's no fun 'thout th' other boys.  
I get countin', one by one, every single noise,  
An' the raindrops, when they strike, sound so kinder  
solemn-like.

I jus' wait in this one place wishin' it would pass,  
Watchin' all th' raindrops race down across th' glass;  
See each big one, when it runs, gobble all th' little  
ones.

*Rain, rain, go away*—wish you'd come at night.  
Guess you knew I'd plans t'day, an' you came fer  
spite.  
Seems zif jus' th' days it pours I most want t' be out-  
doors!

## APPLE-PIE

When our cook she makes a pie  
You oughter see her fingers fly!  
    She sits an' holds a yeller bowl  
    An' stirs so fast she keeps a hole  
Down through the middle of the stuff;  
There's milk an' egg, an' flour enough,  
    And maybe other things, but I  
    Ferget just all that makes a pie!

When our cook she makes a pie  
She rolls the dough, that, by an' by,  
    Is two round blankets; then you'll see  
    Her slice some apples evenly.  
Plump into bed she makes 'em hop,  
An' cuts some peep-holes through the top  
    So they won't smother when they lie  
    All warm an' sugared in the pie.

When our cook she makes a pie  
She balances the plate up high,  
    And with a pleasant, snippy sound  
    She trims it nicely all around.



And when she's thumb'd the edges tight,  
The apples can't get up at night.

And when she's baked it, then, oh my!  
You never et such apple-pie!



## IN THE STUDY

Nicest place in all the house  
Is my daddy's study chair;  
Just as quiet as a mouse  
I go creeping there,  
An' he gives a little smile,  
Writing, writing, all the while.

There's at least a million books  
Up and down and round the wall.  
I guess, from the way it looks,  
I can't read them all!  
If I did I'm sure I'd be  
Just as wise and big as he.

## KETCHIN' RIDES

I'm awful fond of ketchin' rides.

I like those trucks where I kin stand  
Without a-holdin' to the sides  
(Er maybe holdin' with one hand!),  
Though teacher says it's not refined  
To go a-ketchin' on behind.

I almost *never* walk to school,  
So many wagons pass our place;  
My fav'rite one he makes a rule  
Of always leadin' me a chase,  
An' then pertendin' he's too blind  
To see me ketchin' on behind.

I've found there's just two kinds of men  
What drives th' wagons in our town,  
'Cause when I meet 'em, now an' then,  
There's some that grab their whips er  
frown,  
But some they nod an' never mind  
When I am ketchin' on behind.

Th' one that drives th' movin' van  
Told me an' Brud he'd knock our skulls  
Together—*he's th' kind of man*

## KETCHIN' RIDES

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*That's mean to cats an' animuls.*  
But any man is good an' kind  
Who *likes* yer ketchin' on behind.

I guess when I am rich an' great  
An' own a truck an' grocery cart,  
I'll always drive 'em slow, er wait  
So little chaps kin get a start,  
An' have 'em built so boys kin find  
A place fer ketchin' on behind.

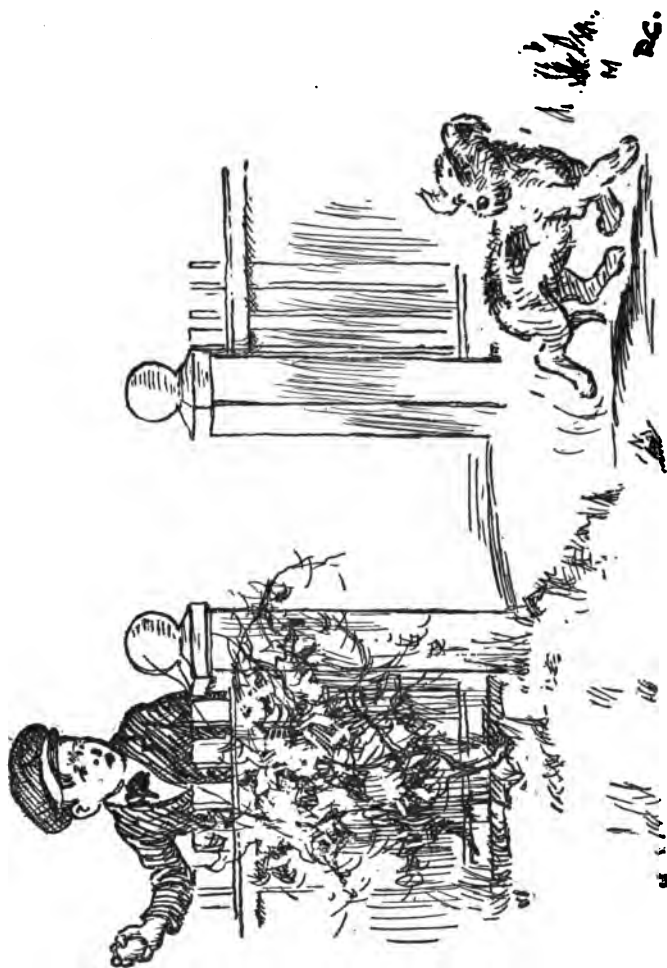


## SYMPATHETIC

Whenever I start out to walk, our dog he seems to  
know,  
And runs along ahead of me to show he's coming  
too;  
And when there is a reason why he really mustn't go  
The hollering "Go Home" to him is awful hard  
to do.

He wags his tail and jumps around, and seems as if  
he said,  
"I guess you didn't mean it, you were only jokin'  
then!"  
But when he sees I'm serious he kinder droops his  
head,  
Or looks up at me sorrowful, an' looks away again.

And then at last he minds me if I keep an angry tone,  
It's awful hard to do it, but I try with all my  
might;  
And sometimes when I look around I see him all  
alone  
A-watchin' me and watchin' me until I'm out of  
sight.





You see I know just how it is, 'cause some days when  
I find

My brother's got to hurry off with bigger boys to  
play,

And when he says I mustn't go and tag along behind,

He leaves me sittin' somewheres and a-feelin' just  
that way!



## IN THE MORNING

Reggalerly every day,  
When my papa's gotten up,  
I can see him far away  
    Mixin' sumpin' in a cup;  
I can hear him slappy-slap  
With a knife against a strap.

He is such a funny sight  
    In the mirror on the shelf,  
With his face all blobby white,  
    Makin' faces at himself;  
But I mustn't laugh, or he  
Comes an' rubs it all on me!

Papa says when I'm growed up,  
    With some troubles an' a wife,  
I can have a mixer-cup  
    An' a shiny crooked knife;  
But he says I must begin  
Puttin' pricklers in my chin.



### 'F I WAS ER HORSE!

'F I was er horse I'd hate t' wear  
A collar what didn't fit,  
An' blinder-things, an' I wouldn't care  
To chew on a iron bit.  
It ain't a way 'at I'd want'er live,  
To just go everywhere I was driv.

'F I was er horse, I guess you'd see  
I'd run away pretty quick!  
I'd tear my harness an' wriggle free  
An' go where th' grass was thick.  
I'd kick my heels, an' I'd neigh fer joy,  
But I ain't er horse, I'm er little boy!

## SPECIAL WORDS

My mother she has special words  
She's alwuz usin', but I find  
The ones that I've most often heard  
Is By-um-by and Never-mind.

Whenever I can't have my way  
An' beg her "when?" and tease her  
"why?"  
The things she's likeliest to say  
Is Never-mind and By-um-by.

An when our picnic stopped becuz  
It rained, er sumpin' of the kind,  
The only things she told us was  
Jus' By-um-by an' Never-mind.

I as't when By-um-by would be,  
She told me "Never-mind!" so I  
Said "What is Never-mind?" an' she  
Said I'd discover, By-um-by.

My mother she has special words  
For question-answerin' an' such,  
But I guess some that I have heard  
Don't really mean so awful much.

## AN IMAGINING

Two sisters that I never saw  
Are lying underneath the ground.  
Sometimes my mother takes me there  
And says that I may play around.

But while she sits so quietly,  
I often have imaginings,  
And see a-flying near her head  
Two little baby girls with wings.

## MY SORE THUMB

I jabbed a jack-knife in my thumb—  
Th' blood just *spurted* when it come!  
The cook got faint, an' nurse she yelled  
An' showed me how it should be held,  
An' Gran'ma went to get a rag,  
An' couldn't find one in th' bag;  
An' all the rest was just struck *dumb*  
To see my thumb!

Since I went an' jabbed my thumb  
I go around a-lookin' glum,  
And Aunt, she pats me on the head  
An' gives me extra ginger-bread;  
But brother's *mad*, an' says he'll go  
An' take an' axe, an' chop his toe:  
An' *then* he guesses I'll keep mum  
About my *thumb*!

At school they as't to see my thumb,  
But I just showed it to my chum,  
An' any else that wants to see  
Must divvy up their cake with me!

## MY SORE THUMB

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It's gettin' well so fast, I think  
I'll fix it up with crimson ink,  
An' that'll keep up *int'rest* some  
In my poor thumb!



## AT THE ZOO

### I.

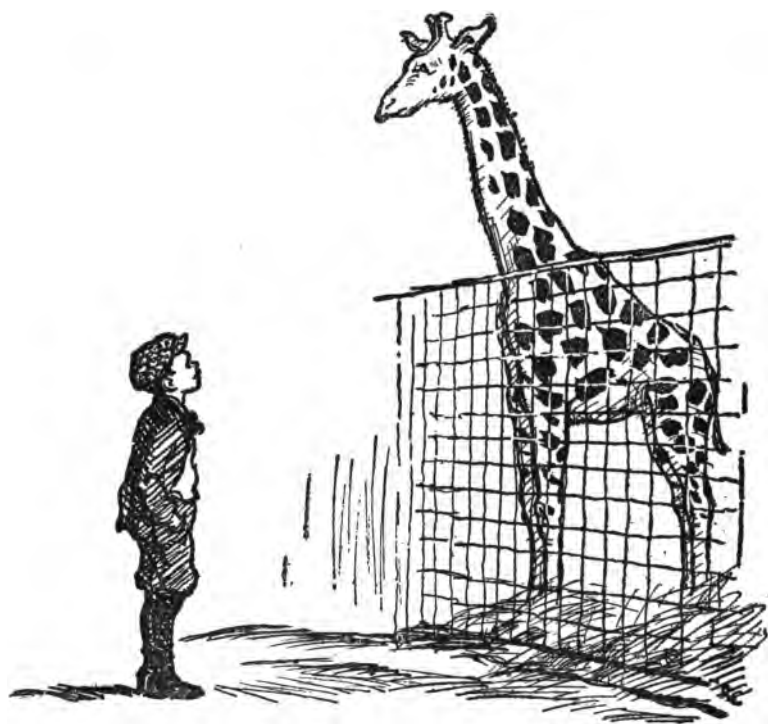
It must be hard for you, porcupine,  
To dress when the day begins!  
I'm glad there aren't any clothes of mine  
A-needin' so many pins.

But when I've been saucy and horrid too,  
Or up to some naughty prank,  
If I could only wear clothes like you  
I'd be awfully hard to spank!

### II.

A snake's the funniest thing I know,  
So dreadfully incomplete;  
Without any arms where hands can grow,  
And not any legs for feet.

But I wish I could crawl on the ground  
that way,  
Or shin up the apple trees,  
And not have nursie get mad and say  
There's holes in my stockin' knees!







## III.

I'm glad I wasn't a monkey too!  
It's jolly to watch you climb,  
But you're fighting and biting the whole  
day through,  
And chattering all the time.

But maybe a tail like that would be  
An awfully useful thing  
Up in our neighbor's cherry tree  
On holidays in the spring!

## IV.

You thin giraffe, if I was you,  
I'd have a hard time, I spec';  
For nursie would make a great to-do  
A-washing my face an' neck.

But when the jam and the cookie-jar  
Are hid on the highest shelf,  
I wisht I was as tall as you creatures are,  
Instead of my tiny self.

## MAKIN' THINGS

Whenever Christmas time comes round it really  
doesn't take

Much money, 'cause the folks prefer the presents  
that I *make*.

And so, for days and days before, I saw and pound  
and glue,

A-making things and planning who's the best to give  
'em to.

But sometimes I get thinking that I'd really like it  
more

If folks would only use the things for what I make  
'em for!





## A RECOLLECTION

When we was visitin' a farm  
I begged an' begged an' maybe squealed,  
(I didn't see how it could harm)  
To just run barefoot in a field.  
Until at last the lady said  
They'd better let me go ahead.

It was so stubbuly that each  
Poor foot got hurtin' right away;  
Still I was bound that I would reach  
A haystack an' pertend to play.  
But I just cried against the stack  
For somebody to fetch me back.

My brother only stood an' laughed!  
I might uv caught my death-o-cold  
Away out there in all that draught,  
'Cause I am only eight years old.  
But sometimes seems zif older folks  
'L laugh at things that isn't jokes.

## THE FIRST VALENTINE

I'd like to write a valentine—  
Not like the kind one sees about;  
It mustn't have a single line  
That folks could ever tease about.

It mustn't be all hearts and birds  
'And paper lace—the sissy kind;  
I don't want any silly words—  
The lovey, dovey, kissy kind.

But certainly it mustn't be  
A cheap and common penny one,  
And it must sort of make her see  
I like her best of anyone!

## COUGHS

They say little boys  
Who are making a noise  
Are doing just what you'd expect.  
But I wish I could cough  
Without starting folks off—  
It has a most dreadful effect!

I can whistle and call,  
I can whoop in the hall,  
I can pound on a pan with a stone,—  
And the folks might be nice;  
But if I cough twice  
Then nobody lets me alone.

I can say I'm a bear,  
I can growl from a lair  
Or make different sounds in my play,  
But if air makes me choke,  
Or I cough for a joke,  
Why, no one believes what I say.

Yet everyone knows  
That a tickle just grows  
With maybe no reason but dust;



And times when you swallow  
It sticks in some hollow,  
And then you must cough or you bust.

Though I say what I choose,  
They all feel of my shoes,  
Or they tie an old scarf round my chin.  
I must put on a coat,  
Or they look down my throat,  
And tell me I gotta come in.

So when grown-ups are there,  
Why, I always take care,  
If I'm feeling the start of a cough,  
And I bury my face;  
Or I hurry some place  
Where it's safer to let it go off.

## NURSES

There isn't anythin' that's worse  
Than for a *boy* to have a nurse.  
For even when she helps y' play,  
She's alwuz gettin' in th' way;  
There's so few things she understands,  
She's just a bother on your hands.

I learned this, cuz a boy I know  
Has one that never lets him go.  
First time we met, I thought that such  
A feller wasn't good for much.  
He licked me, though, an' sat on top  
Until his nurse she made him stop.

And afterwards, why him an' me  
We're just as friendly as can be,  
An' I am sure that nurse-girl is  
His parents' fault instead of his.  
They ought to know she just annoys,—  
They're awful ignerunt of boys!



## RUNNED AWAY

Dear Sis: I wrote this noat to say Ive ben an gone an runned away; I gess the fambily Ive got wunt miss me such a nawful lot, cuz yesterday you no I had a nawful wollupin from dad an nurse she scolded me like fun fer sumpthin some one else had dun. Last night ma sent me off to bed before Id got a chapter read. It shows, so fur as I kin see, that no one cares a rap fer me. I gess that I aint understood and so Ive run away fer good. But sis if there is pie to-day fer dinner, snake a piece away, and bring it to me when your able, youll find me hiding in the stable.

## GETTIN' WASHED

At breakfast, when I'm kinder late an' hurry to my place,

An' want'er eat, some person says, "Oh, what a dirty face!"

Or, "Leave the table right away, those hands are a disgrace!"

When I come back all nice an' clean my mother says she fears

I didn't take a lot of pains to wash behin' my ears.

An' lots o' times when I've been out an' haven't touched a thin'

That could have dirtied me a *bit*, why someone's called me in—

'Cause what they went an' said was dirt was shadows on my skin.

But s'pose that cedar tree I climbed did leave some teeny smears,

I don't see how a bit could get 'way up behin' my ears!

Oh, when I'm big, without a nurse or grown-up folks that tease,

Some weeks I'll wear my oldest clo'es as dirty as I please,

'An' muss my hair an' have big holes in both my  
stockin' knees.

Of course I'll wash each *mornin'*, 'cept when play-  
time interferes,

But *you just bet* I'll let alone that place behin' my  
cars!

## THE FLY IN THE OINTMENT

I never care when my feet are wet,  
    Though grown-ups worry so;  
I never trouble how cold I get,  
    I'm tougher 'n people know.  
And the coldest kind of a day just suits,—  
But I hate when snow gets into my boots.

I like it often to storm and blow,  
    And not every day be fair.  
I run and jump in the deepest snow:  
    When a snowball hits me square  
I ain't the kind that hollers and scoots,—  
But I hate when snow gets into my boots.

I'd never button my coat at all  
    If people would let me be.  
I ain't afraid when I slip and fall  
    In snowdrifts up to my knee.

148 THE FLY IN THE OINTMENT

And the drifts in front of our houses are  
beauts!—

But I hate when snow gets into my boots.



## WHEN DADDY SINGS

When Daddy sings he keeps his chin  
Pressed tight against his chest,  
And just before the folks begin  
He gives his voice a test,  
And growls "Do, do" first high, then low,  
To see which way sounds best.

When Daddy sings it makes him frown  
Or wrinkle up his nose.  
He waves one finger up and down  
The way the music goes;  
And when the song lasts very long,  
He rises on his toes.

"Black Joe" and "Cradle of the Deep"—  
He growls them extra strong.  
I don't know why he cares a heap  
To see what words belong.  
He just sings "Tum ti iddy um"  
In every single song.



## PIRATE'S CAVE

Under the table, when dinner's through,  
There is my fav'rite cave.  
My sister she is a pirate crew,  
An' I am a captain brave.  
With treasure out of the cookie jar,  
And plunder from other lands,  
To the pirate lair that's hidden there  
We creep on our knees and hands.

Before the people get up to go,  
Then is the time to hide.  
I whisper, "Ho, my lads, lie low,  
There are foes on every side!"  
And then I thump on the table top,  
And Papa says, "Hey! What's that?"  
And another thump makes Mother jump  
And guess that it's just the cat.

But Papa says, when I thump again,  
"P'r'aps it's a pirate bold!"  
And his legs an' feet come huntin' then,  
A-tryin' to catch a-hold;  
He keeps me hurryin' back an' forth  
Till his hands come huntin' too,  
Then I sink the ship when I feel his grip,  
And Mother she gets the crew!



### DAYTIME NAPS

My mother thinks that little chaps  
Who play a lot need daytime naps;  
Though I've explained, with all my might,  
That I can't sleep except at night.

But sometimes, when I've played a lot,  
I'd jus' as liv go in as not;  
It gives her quite a nice surprise  
When I lie down and shut my eyes.

I couldn't get to sleep, I know;  
But for a little while or so  
I get to seeing on the wall  
Queer pictures that aren't there at all.

One time a camel stuck his head  
Right close up to me on the bed,  
And animals I'd seen that day  
Up at the Zoo, they came to play.

And once I thought of curious things  
That I could do if I had wings.  
But all the nicest parts of it  
I can't remember now a bit!

I think so hard of things I'd do,  
I feel all stretchy when I'm through,  
And then I look and find it's been  
More'n a hour since I came in.

It's nice to lie and think, perhaps;  
But just the same I can't take naps!  
(And mother says she sees it's true,  
But thanks me just for tryin' to.)

## TOP-TIME

I wisht I knew what makes the top-time come  
Before it's gotten over bein' cold;  
Sometimes my fingers get so kinder numb  
The string can't help from comin' all  
unrolled.

I like a top-string better when it's old,  
An' then I tell yer, I can make 'er hum!  
I've learnt a special secret way t' hold,  
By pressin', when I throw 'er, with my  
thumb.

You know that stubby yellor one I had?—  
It split ten other tops, er maybe more—  
I broke it, an' I tell yer, I felt bad!  
But now she's mended better 'an before.  
I don't see why our cook should get so mad  
Each time I spin 'er on the kitchen floor.



## KITE-TIME

Last night me an' my brother made a kite—  
The biggest one we've ever tried to do.  
Stood up on end 'twas more'n twice my height  
(The kind that has three sticks instead of two).  
I made the tail, an' 'fore I'd gotten through  
I'd used up every rag there was in sight.  
To fly her 'd take a whoppin' wind, we knew,  
And then to-day it came exactly right.  
A boughten kite may have a neater look,  
But home-made ones are mighty hard to beat.  
This big one nearly dived us off our feet—  
'Twas in the length of tail we were mistook;  
An' you can see her, any time you look,  
A-hangin' in that elm tree down the street.



## BALL-TIME

This week it's got so warm that I have been  
Without my overcoat for every day.

I wisht I hadn't promised to stay in

An' study for an hour, instead of play.

'Cause with the window up a little way

I smell the grass and see the buds begin.

Our clock's a lot behind time, I should say,  
An' studyin' too hard'll make me thin!

I hear the boys outside begin to call—

They want me for a game of two-old-cat.

I guess they know I've got a brand new  
ball;—

It isn't me they want so much as that.

I bet you they can't borrow it at all

Unless I get first innin's at the bat!



### SWIMMIN'-TIME

It was so hot in school I sat an' sweat,  
An' thought all day how fine a swim would feel.  
When time was up we didn't wait, you bet,  
But just raced out here an' began to *peel*!  
It's fun to hear the little fellers squeal  
Each time you shove 'em in an' get 'em wet.  
Once I was skeered when some big boy would  
steal  
Close up behind—it kinder skeers me yet!  
But anyhow I can stay under more  
Than any boy my size—I do it lots.  
It's funny—an' I've noticed it before—  
Down deep the water's warm an' cold in spots.  
Hi! Hi, there! See those fellers up on shore—  
They're tyin' all our stockin's into knots!

## NUTTIN'-TIME

I know where butternut an' shag-bark trees

Grow thick,—an' chestnuts an' sweet-acorns too.  
Each fall we go there an' pick all we please—

We take our lunch an' stay the whole day  
through.

Last week we went to where the walnuts grew,  
With two big sacks an' filled 'em at our ease.

I shinned one tree—that's what I love to do!—  
And then we hunted, on our hands an' knees.

But after all, the part I like the best

Is when the sacks have gotten pretty fat,  
An' some one says it's time we ought to rest

An' start the jam an' cookies an' all that.

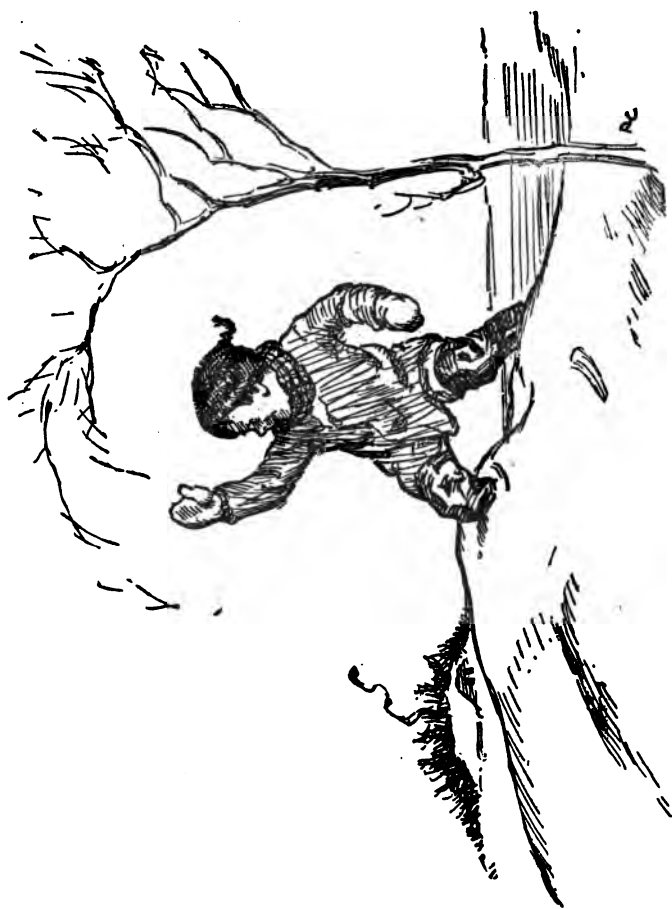
This time it kind of spoiled my interest

To find a chestnut burr just where I sat.



## SNOWBALL-TIME

When the snow first comes, so fine an' thin,  
It's good for snow ice-cream; an' by-an'-by  
Some evenin' we will fill a heapin' tin,  
And drip hot syrup in—oh me, oh my!  
Until this week the snow has been too dry,  
But now it packs, and snow fights will begin.  
We've built a block-house with a roof so high  
We only stoop a little when we're in!  
I've got some boots that come above my knees—  
Last winter, too, they were my *special pride*;  
I plunge through any snow-drifts that I please,  
Or climb on top of 'em an' sit an' slide.  
But Jimminy! my toes begins to freeze  
If ever any snow gets down inside.





## THE SCAPEGOAT

I'm the only one she caught;  
It was Willie cracked her winders,  
It was Jimmy stole the vase  
Off the gate-post at her place,  
Freddy broke it all to flinders.  
It was Dick and Bud that fought,  
It was Sammy Jones that sassed her.  
There was nothin' I had done,  
I was actin' as I ought,  
But we all began to run—  
And the rest of 'em ran faster,  
I'm the only one she caught.

I'm the only one she caught;  
Wisht I was a faster runner.  
Now she says she'll make of me  
An example, so that we  
Won't repeat the harm we done her,—  
Says it's time that we was taught.  
Guess they'll wish they'd seen me through it,  
Cause they know, though I can't run  
Quite as fast as p'raps I ought,  
I can lick 'em, one by one!  
I bet, next time, they'll see to it  
It ain't only me that's caught.

## THE WIND

The wind it rushes in and out  
An' makes a great to-do,  
An' little leaves leap all about  
To tell you where it blew.

Whenever it goes racing by  
It pulls my clothes and hair;  
Some places it will sing or sigh,  
But no one sees it there!

The trees are p'raps the only thing  
That *see* it as it blows,  
For they all lean, an' point, an' sing  
In whispers, "There it goes!"



## PRAYER FOR A LITTLE BOY

*Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep.  
If I should die before I wake,  
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to take.  
And this I ask for Jesus' sake.*

But while I live I want to be from quick and angry  
passions free,  
With gentle thoughts, and happy face, and pleasant  
words in every place.  
I pray, whatever wrong I do, I'll never say what is  
not true;  
Be willing at my task each day, and always honest in  
my play.

Make me unselfish with my joys, and generous to  
other boys;  
And kind and helpful to the old, and prompt to do  
what I am told.  
Bless every one I love, and teach me how to help  
and comfort each.  
Give me the strength right-living brings, and make  
me good in little things.—Amen.



### THE CAGED COCKATOO

"Perhaps," the little maiden said,  
"A lovely Princess would not wed  
Some Genii of high degree,  
And now she's prisoned in a bird  
Until we learn the magic word,  
And burn her plumes, and set her free."

"Of course," said he, "that may be true,—  
But p'raps it's just a cockatoo  
From far-off Africa or Spain;  
But maybe, on its ocean trip  
It travelled in a pirate-ship  
Where gold was hid and men were slain!"

## THINGS THAT GET LOST

They tell me, when I lose a thing,  
No one's at fault but me;  
It's just because I'm carelesser  
'N what I ought to be.  
But there are happenin's that show  
It isn't true a bit—  
'Cause when a thing gets lost, I know  
It's part the fault of *it*.  
'Cause often when I'm in the house  
For just a little while,  
I put my cap an' ball an' such  
All in a little pile.  
Then when I'm in a rush to go,  
And hurry right to where  
I left 'em, it's most always so  
That *one* of 'em's not there!  
And while we hunt with all our might,  
The thing we're looking for  
Is hid, I'm sure, just out of sight  
An' laughin' more an' more.  
'Cause it can hear us goin' wrong  
An' sayin', "*Where d' you s'pose*  
*That old thing is?*" An' all along  
It's happy, 'cause IT knows!





## VACATION IN THE COUNTRY

If I lived in the country *every* day  
Instead of only when vacations come,  
Would I get sunburned so that it would stay,  
And say words like "I reckon" and "to  
hum"?

Could I wear one suspender if I chose,  
And learn an awful lot of useful things,  
Like how to pick up pebbles with my toes,  
Or tell a bird from just the way it sings?

And would I know the places where to dive,  
And all the quickest cuts across the lots?

## VACATION IN THE COUNTRY 167

And could I keep some snakes and frogs  
    alive,  
And would my feet get hard, with callus  
    spots?

Back home there in the city, there's no way  
    To learn such useful things; so I've a mind,  
Before the folks all start to go away,  
    To find some place to hide, and stay  
    behind.

## BUILDIN' FIRES

To build a fire is better fun  
Than almost anythin' I know.  
There's certain ways it should be done,  
Or else it's likely not to go.  
My father says that he admires  
A boy that's good at buildin' fires.

An' in the diff'runt ones I've tried,  
There's lots of little thin's I've learnt,  
Like lightin' from the windward side,  
An' how to bank 'er when she's burnt.  
An' how to make the smudges thick,  
An' when to poke 'er with a stick.

On Saturdays we love to go  
And do like tramps or Indians do,  
An' cook an ear of corn or so,  
With frogs' legs, or some fishes too.  
(The nicest food that's ever cooked  
Is veg'tables that you have hooked.)

A fire at home is not the same;  
You have to get a chair an' sit  
And watch a kind of *gentle* flame  
With no excitement over it.  
An' grown-up folks, instead of you,  
Do all the pokin' there's to do.





## REJECTED

There's a nawful pretty teacher at our school, an'  
once I told her  
That I thought we might be married if she'd wait till  
I was older;  
There was no one 'cept my mother that I liked so  
well, I said.  
She didn't even answer, but she laughed at me in-  
stead.

She's forgotten all about it, an' it seems to me a pity  
That folks what are so cruel should be made so  
awful pretty.  
But I guess I'll make her sorry that she treated me  
so hard,  
If I do what I've been plannin', an' I die in her front  
yard.

## OUR GANG

*With affectionate apologies*

We've got a gang, and I belong,  
It's active all the year around;  
We've got a drum-corps, twenty strong,  
A secret club and camping ground.  
And then of course we have a yell  
That we can whistle low or hum,  
And when I hear it, I can tell  
A fellow's calling me to come.  
Wherever it might be,  
I'd answer instantly,  
For I would know 'twas Dop or Al  
Or Jinks or Don or Rob or Hal  
Or all of 'em but me.

To-day I heard my mother say  
How very greatly she enjoys  
A-seeing with me in my play  
So nice a lot of little boys.  
But when I told 'em so, they guessed  
That maybe she would not admire  
Us all so much, if I confessed  
That we had set some woods afire!

It's really true, and we  
Were sure as we could be  
That men were after Dop and Lest  
And Jinks and Buster and the rest  
And Don and Rob and me.

But later, in our rondevoo—  
A very special secret one—  
We talked about a deed or two  
Of mischief we had lately done  
And then and there we all agreed  
We none of us were scared a bit!  
We planned another direful deed,  
We were so bold and desperit.  
We named us the M.D.  
And swore to secrecy;  
The members we agreed upon  
Was Al an' Dop an' Jinks an' Don  
An' sev'ral more, an' me.

If you've no gang you call your own,  
You're someone to be sorry for.  
You can't do direful deeds alone,  
And keep the oaths that you have sworn.  
I know some secrets dark and dread  
About us fellows, every one—  
But I won't tell, alive or dead,  
The awful deeds I know they done.



And though I get to be  
A grown-up man, you'll see  
I'll never tell on Dop or Al  
Or Jinks or Don or Rob or Hal  
Or all the rest, or me!



## SEWIN' BUTTONS ON

Every time my mother sews  
Some kind of button on my clo'es,  
It always gives me a surprise  
To see how fast the needle flies.  
In buttons all the difference is,  
They have four little holes or two;  
But just whichever hole she says,  
She makes her needle-point come through!  
She never seems to aim,  
But it's always just the same—  
It's as int'restin' to watch her as 'most any sort  
of game.

But when I start to sewin' one,  
Why, just as soon as I've begun,  
The thread gets tangled as can be,  
Or keeps a-gettin' caught on me.  
An' after all the time it takes  
To get the needle goin' some,  
It hits the button hard, an' breaks,  
Or comes one side an' pricks my thumb.  
But anybody knows  
That troubles such as those  
My mother never seems to have, no matter  
what she sews!

An' so I think, when I have grown,  
And got a house that's all my own,  
An' wife an' family an' such,  
If I lose off my buttons much  
I'll have my mother always there  
To sew 'em on for me again;  
Unless she thought she wouldn't care  
To be so very busy then,  
Or somethin' else occurred  
That she thought that she preferred—  
But she says it is the nicest plan she ever,  
ever heard!



## DRESSIN' UP

It's fun up in the attic, when mother lets us 'splore  
In all the trunks an' boxes there an' litter up the floor—  
She tells us we may try things on if we won't get 'em  
tore.

An' sometimes we play grown-up folks in big ol'-  
fashioned clo'es;

Or sometimes dress up fancy ways an' play we're  
givin' shows,

An' charge ten pins admission, an' all the fam'bly goes.

But when we find ol' things of mine we rig'em up on sis,  
An' p'rade around, an' daddy says, "Whose little  
chap is this?"

An' mother says, "Dear little boy!" an' asks her for  
a kiss.

But when me an' my sister put her skirts an' stuff on me,  
I notice no one seems to think 'at it's a girl they see;  
But the women say "My Gracious!" an' the men folks  
say "Oh Gee!"

## **"HEAR MY DOLLIES' PRAYER"**

O Lord, I pray Thee, hear my dollies' prayer,  
And teach them how to ask for what is right;  
But if it's going to give You extra care,  
Then You might skip *my* blessings for to-night.  
Please make them all more loving and polite;  
I pray Thee not to let their covers tear,  
But keep their sawdust stuffings out of sight,  
And please help Anne to grow a head of hair.

I wish poor Bella's knees were made to bend,  
I truly am as sorry as can be.  
I hope that You won't mind, and that You'll send  
The blessings that each dolly asks of Thee.  
And, Lord, I pray that You will just pretend  
This is my dollies talking, 'stead of me.



## ANTHROPOLOGY

I love my *ordernery* dolls the best  
Of any kind that ever could be bought.  
No foreign doll that Santy ever brought  
Is near so nice, no matter how she's dressed.  
I hope my Chinese doll has never guessed  
That I don't love him half of what I *ought!*  
I take good care to see that he is taught  
His lessons oftener than all the rest.

I wish the Dolly-maker would begin  
To mend his ways; I would if I was he!  
'Cause if the dolls that have a yellow skin  
Are heathenish inside as they can be,  
Just think how *sensibuller* he'd have been  
To make 'em all Americans like me.

## THE MISSIONARY'S DAUGHTER

I haven't sewed my children's clo'se  
For days, the way I'd like to do;  
I don't neglect 'em, goodness knows,  
'Cept when it is my duty to;  
They're less important, anyhow,  
'Cause I'm a missionary now.

My heathen doll's not half so dear  
As all my Christian children there,  
And that's what makes my duty clear  
To always give him speshul care;  
'Cause I have found it wrong to do  
The things I'm always wanting to.



## MENDING DAY

How quickly children's clothes will rip and tear!

Each time I put off mending till so late,

I re'lize that a family of eight

Can give a loving mother lots of care.

If more get born I really do declare

I'll put 'em into bed and make 'em wait.

My brother hopes to learn to *operate*,

But there is not a child that I would spare.

He's borrowed three that he pertends are dead.

But I won't even think of such a thin'!

And yet at mending time I've often said

I almost wished—though p'raps it is a sin—

That God had sent *some* paper dolls instead

Whose clothes are only painted on their skin.



## AT THE AQUARIUM

Fishes swimming in and out  
Till my eyes grow dizzy,  
What's the task that you're about,  
Keeping you so busy?

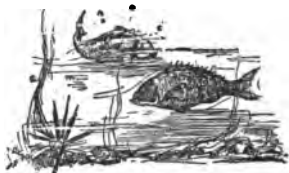
Are you meant, as people say,  
Just to throw a hook at,—  
Or be brought from far away,  
For us all to look at?

Dogs and horses know my words,  
Cats are warm and homey;  
Cows and mice and even birds  
Sometimes get to know me.

Yet you stare with not a wink,  
Seeming not to see me.  
Are there thoughts we both can think,—  
Something strange and dreamy?

I may puzzle you as much!  
And I wonder whether,  
When I see your noses touch,  
You all talk together.

There's another world, it seems,  
That you drift and dart in,  
Full of ways and deeds and dreams  
I can have no part in.



## THE ASSISTANT

I've learnt to sift the flour in, and the way it ought  
to mix,

And I know that more is needed if the stuff is soft  
and sticks.

I'm not just sure of *all* the things you need for mak-  
ing dough,

But that's the sort of kind of thing a man don't have  
to know.

Cook says I'm such a help to her that every day she  
wishes

I could be there advising her and licking off the  
dishes.

## UNREST

The motorman bangs on his noisy gong  
And grins at folks as he whoops along,  
Or stops up quick to jerk us:  
Wish 't I was him! But I'd like it more  
As a druggist-clerk in a city store,  
A-mixing soda and fizz and pop,—  
Or I'd be the help in a candy shop,  
Or one of the boys to mind the bell,  
In a uniform in a big hotel  
If it didn't over-work us!  
Or I'd be a tramp, 'cause his folks don't care  
If he's washed his face or has brushed his hair;  
Or else be a missionary, so  
That I could get foreign stamps, you know:  
But best of all I would like to go  
And be a clown at a circus.  
There's other things I might like to be—  
I know I'm tired of being Me!



## DANDELION

Dandelion, Fuzzy-top, must I stop my play?  
Do you s'pose my mother thinks I'm too long away?  
I had planned a lot of things I must do to-day.  
I was chasing butterflies when you made me stop.  
People say you are so wise, Fairy Fuzzy-top!

Dandelion, Fuzzy-top, won't you tell me true?  
Must I hurry home again, 'fore my play is through?  
Seems as if I had about a million things to do!  
Sunny days are all so short,—and that is why, you  
see,  
I've really got to know at once if mother's wanting  
me.

## HANGING THE STOCKINGS

Christmas eve! It's Christmas eve!

Supper's cleared away,—  
Seems as if I can't believe

That to-day's to-day!  
—I don't see a thing, do you,  
We can hang a stockin' to?

For a month or just about,  
Days would hardly stir,  
Though I crossed their places out  
On the calendar.

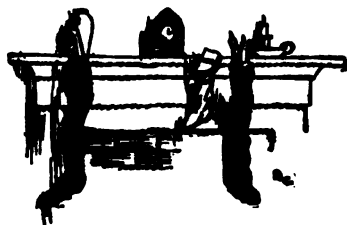
—Pins or nails'll never stick  
In this hard old chimney brick.

P'raps as soon as night's begun  
He'll come stealing in!  
My! It makes the shivers run  
Up and down my skin.  
—Mayn't I pound a nail up here  
In the woorwork, Mother dear?

Daddy's sock'll never do,—  
Not a toy would fit.

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S'pose we let him stand his shoe  
    Just in under it?  
—There! They're done. I'm sleepy, some.  
Bet to-morrow'll never come!



## EVENINGS

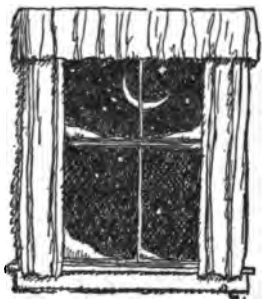
On cold, dark winter evenings,  
    outdoors a wind storm sings;  
You hear a window rattle  
    and a dead limb creaks and swings,  
And grown-ups sit around the fire  
    and talk of diff'runt things.  
But I just fool around and grin,  
    it feels so nice and snug,  
Till pretty soon I go and get  
    my favorite book, and lug  
It near the fire, and stretch out  
    on my stomach on the rug.  
Then by and by my mother  
    raps her thimble on my head  
And says, "Why, boy, it's getting late!  
    Come, run along to bed."

Evenings in the summer,  
    when it's just as light as day,  
With chirpy noises in the trees,  
    and sounds from far away,  
And a sort of warm and grassy smell  
    that makes you want to play;



Why, then the boys come chasing round  
and whistle at the gate,  
And I slip off before I'm seen,  
or mother hollers "Wait!  
Go get your hat, and promise you'll  
be back before it's late!"  
Those summer nights it's father who  
gets after me instead,  
And calls me through the darkness,  
"Boy! Skip right along to bed."

I think the morning's pretty long,  
especially in school;  
And afternoon has time enough  
to suit me, as a rule;  
But evenings they are always short,  
in winter, spring, or fall,  
And every time of year I like  
the evenings best of all.



## ECONOMISIN'

Dad was tickled when I went  
Once and whispered in his ear  
That I wouldn't spend a cent  
Buyin' him a gift this year.  
I would build a fine surprise  
All myself, and '*conomise*.

So I went and bought a saw—  
Not a toy, but good and strong,—  
And a hammer with a claw  
For the nails I hammer wrong.  
I am sure he'll like this more  
Than a present from a store.

Then Dad bought some fancy wood  
When I asked him, though I'm sure  
If he's 'quisitive he could  
Guess I'm makin' furniture.  
If he does, I needn't care,  
For he'll never guess a *chair*!

And I went and bought a bitt—  
Makes holes any size I choose:  
Lots of fixin's come with it  
That I'm learnin' how to use.

P'raps for Christmas time, next year,  
I could make a chiffonier.

'T won't be long before it's done,  
Now I've boughten tools enough;  
Buyin' cushions will be fun,  
And some paint and varnish stuff.  
He'll be deeply touched, I know,  
At my 'conomisin' so.

## AFTER SCHOOL

It's strange to think how much may come from just  
a little thing;

Just as they tell you mighty oaks from little acorns  
spring.

My Grandpa says a kettle once boiled up a bit too  
free

And if it hadn't, so he says, there'd not be any Me!  
Then Grandma lays her knitting down, and says in  
tones severe,

"Don't talk such nonsense to that child,—his bed-  
time's very near."

"Why, I remember," Grandpa says, "as if 't was  
yesterday,

That kettle setting on the stove and bubbling away,  
While twenty pairs of youngsters' eyes would watch  
it dance and hum,

Instead of conning alphabets or figgering a sum.

"Then suddenly I recollect that kettle lid went pop!  
And water ran all down the stove as if 't would never  
stop;

And two young people laughed out loud, which was  
against the rule,  
And so the master chided 'em and kept 'em after  
school.

"Now one of those young laughers was a very shy  
young lad,  
And 't other was a little girl,—the prettiest they had.  
Hey, Grandma! 'Member how the boys all waited  
on the fence?"

"I didn't hear you," Grandma says. "Why don't  
you talk some sense?"

"Ah me," says Grandpa, "there they sat about an  
hour or more,  
While that young lad scraped courage up he'd never  
had before,—  
And wrote it down in billy-dous,—he must have writ-  
ten reams,—  
While Master polished up the stove and maybe  
dreamed *his* dreams.

"Ah me, that little school is gone," says Grandpa,  
sighing hard;

"The woodland path they used to tread is now a  
boulevard.

'T was close to ninety years ago." Cries Grandma,  
"Sakes alive,

You ought to really be ashamed, 't was only sixty-  
five!"





"Ah well," says Grandpa, "those two chicks walked  
hand in hand that day,

It grew to sech a habit that they couldn't break away.

And then she married him. Just why, I've often  
wondered sence,

With all the other boys in town a-waiting on the  
fence.

I guess she mightn't, if she'd known he wasn't very  
rich!"

And Grandma says, "Oh, go to bed,—I've dropped  
another stitch!"



## A NEWSBOY'S PLAINT

Some fren's o' mine is tryin' hard ter put me on de  
queer—

De doctor wat dey sent's a nervey bloke;  
Says 'e, "Yer need de country—I ferbid yer stayin'  
'ere!"

I tell yer straight, I t'ought it was a joke.  
Dere ain't no finer paper-route from Bronx ter  
Chat'am Square—

'Taint like I was a cully shinin' shoes!  
Who's he wid his 'forbiddin'? Now gwan an' quit  
yer kiddin'—

Aw, cheese 'it! 'Ere's a cove dat wants de news!  
Pa—a—peh!

Woil' an' de Joinal! Times an' de Sun!  
Press or de Herat'! Hi—Wich one?  
Mo—o—nin' pa—a—peh! Loidy, 'ere y' uh,  
A—a—ll a—bout de moider—Buy a papeh, Suh?  
Dere's trees an' grass a-growin' in mos' all de city  
parks,

De same as in de country, so dey say;  
Y' hear about de crowin' of de roosters an' de  
larks—

I'd jus' as liv get woke some udder way!





Me fren' wot runs de book-store, he lets me monkey  
round,

An' I see dem country t'ings in picter-books—  
An' I've frequent seen a chicken dat de butcher-boy  
was pickin',

An' dere's often cows a-hangin' up on hooks.

Pa—a—peh!

Woil' an' de Joinal! Times an' de Sun!

Press or de Heral'! Hi—Wich one?

Mo—o—nin' pa—a—peh! Loidy, 'ere y' uh,

A—a—ll a—bout de moider—Buy a papeh. Suh?

I need de country air, 'e says r Aw rats, dat ain't  
a mark

Ter wat I'd need up dere widout de boys!

Dey say dere ain't no 'lectric lights—at night de  
place is dark—

Dere ain't no cops—An' *say!* Dere ain't no *noise!*  
Says 'e, "I wouldn't give *so* much fer wat yer life is  
wort'!"

Fergit it! I ain't askin' 'im ter give.

Who wants ter stay a-stewin' in a place where not-  
tin's doin'?—

I want ter do some livin' wile I live.

Pa—a—peh!

Woil' an' de Joinal! Times an' de Sun!

Press or de Heral'—Hi—Wich one?

Mo—o—nin' pa—a—peh! Loidy, 'ere y' uh,

A—a—ll a—bout de moider—Buy a papeh, Suh?

## AMBROSIA

I have sipped and supped and tasted  
Of the food a poet sings;  
Rare exotic fauna, basted  
By some chef, the peer of kings.  
Cloyed, I've thrown aside or wasted  
Nectar and ambrosial things.

Though I sit amid the gleam of  
Damask, broadcloth, shimmering silk,—  
Crystal bowls that hold the cream of  
Nature's stores of every ilk;  
Oft in yearning mood I dream of  
Boyhood's bowl of bread-and-milk!



## SCEPTICS

When your old dad was as little as you  
Was he likely to do  
What they wanted him to?  
Why, certainly so! And as quick as a wink  
He did as they bid him before you could think.  
Hey! Hey?  
What do you say?  
What makes you keep winking and grinning that  
way?  
Your uncle's been "tellin' you sumthin' "? Dear,  
dear!  
You mustn't believe all the stories you hear.

When dad and his playmates were nice little boys  
The first of their joys  
Was giving their toys  
To poor little children who needed them more;  
Your dad was so good he gave all of his store.  
Hey! Hey?  
What do you say?  
Your mother has some of 'em now, put away?  
Such nerve was unknown in my day!—I'll be bound  
You imps have been snooping and prying around.

When daddy was young he was deaf, dumb, and  
blind

To pranks unrefined;

He'd a serious mind.

He paid no attention to girls and their looks,

But gave all his time to his tasks and his books.

Hey! Hey?

What do you say?

Yes, mother was raised in the very same way.

You found an old letter and read it?—My Scat!

We used to spank children for mischief like that.

## THOSE WILFUL TOYS

My house is quite full of such curious things.  
There are blocks that have feet, there are books that  
    have wings;  
And dolls that can walk, and two old Teddy-bears  
With legs that can carry them up and down stairs.  
    And Polly's not sure, and Jimmy can't say  
    Just how they were made in this curious way.

We stand each book nicely away on the shelf,  
But somehow it seems to get down by itself.  
And toys that we put every day in their place  
All scamper about till they're quite a disgrace.  
    And Polly can't say, and Jimmy don't know  
    Just why we should find them wherever we go.

This morning I called, in a voice loud and clear,  
So even the toys in the attic could hear,  
"If you're all in your places at bedtime, I might  
Bring home something good in my pockets to-night."  
    And Polly don't know, and Jimmy can't say,  
    But they *think* that the toys are quite sure to obey.



## ACCOUNTING OF STOCK

Come here, little girl, come here!

Your daddy has serious fears  
That no one took care, when combing your  
hair,

To see what became of your ears.

Why, bless me! I shouldn't have said  
There was one on each side of your head!  
But p'raps it is done that way, for the fun  
Of hearing two secrets as easy as one!

Come here, little girl, come here!

Your daddy is anxious to see  
If that nose is in place on your dear little face  
Just where it's intended to be.  
Dear, dear, it's too round at the end!  
But that'll be easy to mend,—  
A little girl's nose grows just where it grows  
So it'll be easy to pinch, I suppose.

Come here, little girl, come here!

Your daddy with trouble is tossed.  
It's ages since he has counted to see  
That none of your toes have been lost.

Thank goodness! there's ten of 'em here,—  
There was no occasion for fear.

But everyone knows a little girl's toes  
Should *all* hurry with her wherever she goes.

Come here, little girl, come here!  
And cure your poor daddy's alarms.  
He really can't say, from so far away,  
If you've got the right number of arms.  
What! No more than two? Is that right?  
They ought to be fastened in tight.  
But two isn't bad,—and I'm specially glad  
They're so well adjusted for hugging your  
dad!



## A TOAST

Toast a tyrant band,—*skoel* in sacred chorus!  
Slaves to our command,—czars who trample o'er us.  
Devotees of wrath; source of half our troubles;  
In whose cyclone path cost of living doubles.  
Harmless as the doves; butts of fierce invective;  
Life's true spice, and love's unconfessed objective.  
Gods of our best selves, bidding us confess 'em;  
Fairylane's true elves,—To Our Kids, God Bless  
    'Em!

## AMBUSHED

Peace and safety seem to dwell  
Where my garden grows;  
I've no moat nor citadel  
Where I find repose.  
Yet I dread the sudden yell  
Of some lurking eager foes!  
Silence bids me feel secure,  
As I wander out.  
Weeds and worms and bugs obscure  
Are the foes I rout.  
Yet a premonition sure  
Warns that redskins are about!  
Hark! a hoot-owl—'t is the cry  
Indians used of yore.  
Stealthy footfalls, creeping nigh,  
Thrill me to the core.  
Late! Too late! They've scurried by,  
Gaining first my open door.  
Savage redskins, bent on loot,  
Start with gingerbread;  
Victors now beyond dispute,  
They will scalp me dead.  
*Indians, if you really shoot,*  
*You'll be spanked and sent to bed.*

## THE POOH-POOH BIRD

You've often heard  
The Pooh-Pooh Bird,—  
Don't hesitate to take my word!  
Yet like myself you've never seen it,  
For human gaze would but demean it.

To hide from sight  
Is its delight,  
And so it mostly flies by night,  
And all its life its chief of joys is  
To frighten folks with spooky noises.

When lamps are lit,  
And lone you sit  
A-watching firelight shadows flit,  
Some creaky sound will set you squirming,  
Whose whereabouts you can't determine.

'T is thieves perhaps—those furtive taps!  
Hark—there again! Your courage saps;  
'T is now upstairs, and now the basement,  
And now outside against the casement.

But take my word,  
Those sounds you heard  
Are nothing but the Pooh-Pooh Bird,  
Who flits for fun 'round silent houses,  
And some lone watcher's fear arouses.

If you would fright  
This bird to flight,  
Just cry "Pooh Pooh!" with all your might.  
You'll find your courage quite recovered,  
And he will flee when thus discovered.

## SPIRITS

See that apple, ripe and ruddy,  
There on yonder lofty shelf  
In the corner of my study  
I can scarcely reach, myself.

Only yesterday I bought it,  
Tempted by its rosy glow;  
Though my little ones besought it,  
'T was intended just for show.

They are babes so frail and tender,  
They're so innocent and young;  
Who could but be their defender  
'Gainst malicious slander's tongue!

On the cheek of yonder apple  
There's a scar that lately came.  
Oh for wisdom fit to grapple  
With the question—Who's to blame?

There are little tooth-marks in it,  
Yet it has not moved at all.  
I was absent scarce a minute—  
They're so innocent and small!

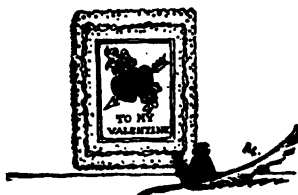
Can it be that spirits haunt us,  
Leaving tooth-marks here and there?  
Playing idle pranks to taunt us,  
Marking footprints on a chair?

They are babes so frail and tender,  
Far too wee for sin or guile;  
Who could but be their defender?  
I must ponder for a while.



## OLD VALENTINES

Tiny maids with sunlit hair;  
Sombre elves with eyes cast down;  
Princess dainty, debonnaire;  
Auburn tresses, gold, and brown.  
Some were gay and some were grave;  
Shyly swayed by blame or praise;  
Others ruled their willing slave  
With their tiny tyrant ways.  
Time has blent them all for me  
In one golden memory.



## AN OLD CHRISTMAS CAROL

Oh wake ye, little children,  
And be of goodlie cheer.  
Yon sun so high along the sky  
Hath shone two thousand year.  
And once it saw a little child  
In manger lying undefiled,  
And all about the cattle mild  
Did lovingly draw near.  
So wake ye, little children,  
And be of goodlie cheer.

Oh wake ye, little children,  
And let each heart be gay.  
Good Will to Men they carolled then,  
And why should ye delay?  
Awake, awake, and rise and sing,  
And greet ye every living thing,  
For man and beast did greet your King  
On that first Christmas day!  
Then wake ye, little children,  
For this is Christmas day.

## WHEN THE CHILD IS KING

Babe, so long ago enshrined  
In a stable bare and gray,  
Something of Thy sweeter mind,  
Of Thy love for all Thy kind,  
Rules us on Thy natal day.  
And because a shepherd band,—  
Sages, too, with gifts in train,—  
Knelt and kissed a baby hand,  
Yearning for some wee command,  
So to-day a child shall reign.



## SANTA CLAUS

Jingle of bell and clattering hoof  
And shouts borne down the blast,  
And muffled sounds from the snowy roof  
While the winter wind sweeps past;  
And sleepy eyes grow big and round,  
And breaths are hushed at each mystic sound  
While childish hearts beat fast.

The flick'ring flames, as they crack and glow,  
Peep up the chimney wide,  
And whisper then to the ghostly row  
Of stockings side by side.  
The eight-day clock, where it stands in state,  
Holds fast its breath in the silent wait  
For the king of Christmas-tide.

The days slip by of those happy times;  
The paths we trod of yore  
To the fairyland of the nurse's rhymes  
Are barred by a closing door.  
And we smile at the tales of a year ago  
As childhood's truths into fables grow;  
And lost is our goblin lore.

But yet to-day from the mantel-shelf  
The stockings greet our eyes,  
And our faith in the jolly Christmas Elf  
On firm foundation lies.  
For we see in merry lurking there  
A father's love or a mother's care  
Hid under the quaint disguise.

## FATHER SPEAKS

Merry Christmas, one and all!

What a sunny holiday!

Eat our breakfast in the hall?

Just exactly as you say.

Move that tree a little bit,

I keep falling over it.

Children, show me all your toys,

There is room to spread them here.

Yes, that is a jolly noise,—

Hold it further from my ear!

Don't restrain 'em, let 'em play,

Christmas is the children's day.

Just the things you want have come?

Queer how Santy seems to know!

Yes, old fellow, pound your drum,

You may smash it sooner, so.

What? More slippers for your dad?

That makes seven pairs I've had.

Mary, give that child a lift,

Those are my cigars he's on.

Postman calling for a gift?

'Fraid that my last cent has gone.

Don't you think it would be wise  
Next month to economize?

Turn that baby up-side-down!  
See—he's swallowing a wire!  
Hello, Uncle! You in town?  
Help? the Christmas tree's on fire!  
Bring some water right away!  
Whoop, Hurrah! It's Christmas day.



## A MILK TOAST

Come, fill your glasses brimming up  
And raise them overhead!  
I'll pledge a toast before I sup,  
So hasten with the foaming cup,—  
It's nearly time for bed!

I sing not of the ruby wine,—  
My years do not allow;  
Though grown-ups praise the fruitful vine,  
Clink glasses to this toast of mine,—  
Long live the Mooley Cow!



## A RONDEAU OF BABIES

As you must know, some men there be  
Who like to hint that they are free  
From nurs'ry thralldom, so they cry,  
(As though to prove an alibi)  
*"All babies look alike to me."*

To such a man the Fates decree  
The storks shall come in groups of three,—  
It does no good to hide or fly,  
As you must know!

*All babies look alike?*—Ah me,  
When they arrive, I well foresee  
He'll gain a more discerning eye,  
Or else he will discreetly try  
With wiser persons to agree,—  
As you must know.

## THE WORLD IS SO SMALL

The world's a very little place,  
And part of it is walls and floors,  
And part's a pleasant sunny place  
They call "outdoors."

They sometimes wheel me up the street  
When all the world goes out to walk,  
And everybody that I meet  
Talks baby-talk.

The sun behaves in just the way  
To most oblige a little tot;  
It's daylight till I'm through my play,  
And then it's not!

The raindrops never seem to fall  
In any place where I may go.  
The world must truly be quite small  
To suit me so.

## **AFRAID**

**Little noises do not bite!  
Darkness will not harm you!  
See, my arms will hold you tight  
When wee fears alarm you.**

**Wise ones say I do you wrong  
Facing dangers for you;  
You will not grow brave and strong  
With me bending o'er you.**

**But the time is all too brief  
When some pain or other,  
And each baby fear and grief  
Drive you to your mother!**

## NAMING HIM

You'd think, while they're trying to find me a name  
That I'd have a right to a part in the game!  
Through most of the morning my father has said  
Just nothing but Aaron, while mother, instead,  
Would settle *her* family name on my head;  
Meanwhile they forget that I haven't been fed!



## THE INTERPRETER

I cannot talk the grown-up way,  
To tell them all I've thought and planned;  
And nearly all that grown-ups say  
I do not plainly understand.

But every little murmuring breeze,  
Or sounds that whisper in a shell,  
Or leaves that rustle on the trees,—  
I understand them all quite well.

## A BUSY MORNING

One morning mother had to be away  
And nurse forgot me for a little while;  
Oh, when I get to thinking of that day  
I lie quite still and shut my eyes and smile.  
Then grown-ups say, "He sleeps, the little dear!  
And dreams an angel whispers in his ear."

It really isn't often such a chance  
Can come to such a little chap as me.  
To get away from every watchful glance  
And just start out to see what I can see;  
To feel of things, and pound with all my might,  
And learn which ones to break and which to bite.

It's true I often wish I hadn't tried  
To see just what was in that little jug;  
I spoiled a dress that was my special pride,  
And made a dreadful black spot on the rug.  
It wasn't all my fault, for I should think  
A tippy table was no place for ink.

One memory I always shall enjoy,  
Though I was spanked for doing it, alas!  
I pounded hard that other little boy  
Who made up faces at me from a glass.

He frowned and stuck his tongue out, and it's true  
That those are things no proper child should do.

It's strange that in the rooms where grown-ups  
stay

There should be such a lot of useless waste;  
So many things that are no good for play,  
And almost nothing that is good to taste.  
And everywhere there is so much you find  
That gets you into trouble of some kind.

It isn't fair that they should always keep  
The nicest looking things so out of reach.  
The road to some is very long and steep,  
But on that day I got a chance at each.  
And so I lie and dream, and smile and—wait.  
I've had *one* day of life, at any rate.

## HER GIFT

Her eyes, Her mouth, Her chin, so strangely small,  
Her very hands, in such frail likeness made,  
That one caress it seems might crush them all,  
And so I gaze, and wonder, half afraid.

So wee a gift—yet wealth of many lands  
Could never buy it in the richest marts!  
So frail a gift—and yet those baby hands  
Take mighty hold upon two human hearts.





### FORTIFIED

Little dear heart, tiny wonderer,  
    With round eyes that search clean through one,  
Little tender-fisted sunderer  
    Of my old world and my new one,—  
Whence the sunbeam warm that dances  
In those mirthful baby glances?

If that other world endowed thee  
    With a soul of crystal clearness,  
When our dullened earth has cowed thee  
    With its mortal burden's nearness,  
Who am I to give thee training  
To withstand a life's explaining?

Even now I see an answer  
In the little arms upflinging,  
In thy dimples, wee entrancer,  
And thy blithesome, wordless singing.  
Love and gentleness and joying  
May withstand old Earth's annoying.

Though this life's thick fogs be clouding  
Recollections of some other,  
May no mist-bank e'er come crowding  
'Twixt thee, wee one, and thy mother.  
Hers the gifts for thy preserving:  
I but hope to share in serving!

## A BABY AT THE PARTY

I found one night, when I awoke,  
They'd brought me down the stair  
To show me to some noisy folk  
Who were all eating there.  
Such silly things they did and said,  
I cried the louder for my bed.

## BABY'S FIRST CHRISTMAS

They took away my bottle  
And they gave me toys and drums,—  
I wonder do they act like that  
Whenever Christmas comes?  
I'm glad it's only once a year  
They make such noises in my car.

## WHEN GRANDMA COMES

There's never any noise or fuss  
When Grandma comes to visit us.  
She always knows just what to do,  
For me and for my mother too.  
And it's so peaceful here at rest  
All snuggled up against her breast.



## BOOKS

The rows of letters on the page  
Can talk, for grown-ups tell me so;  
But pictures tell me, at my age,  
Quite all the things I need to know.

But when there are no pictures there,  
(And many books are made that way)  
I open pages anywhere  
And guess at what the letters say.

## THE LONELY BABY

Whose dolly is you?

Dearie me! I declare

Your eyes are tipped up and they've pulled  
out your hair;

And your snub little nose, and your fingers  
and toes

And your curious clo'se

Kind of frighten me, too!

Whose dolly is you?

Whose dolly is you?

Dearie me! Can it be

They are tired of dollies, 'way over the sea?

Does nobody care for a baby out there,

But cuddles a bear

Or a doggie or two?

Whose dolly is you?

Whose dolly is you?

Did they send you to me

'Cause they know I'm as lonesome as lone-  
some can be?

I'd like to have dollies like me, for a while,

But I've gone out of style,—

I'm nobody's, too!

Whose dolly is you?

## INCONSISTENT

They say I'm a darling, and Joy-of-the-House,  
They call me their Precious, and Ducky, and  
Lamb;  
I'm Bunny, and Honey, and Dear Little Mouse,  
And nothing's too good for me, imp that I am.

My fingers and toes are so chubby and fat,  
My nose is so dear, and my hair is like silk,—  
But if they do love me as much as all that,  
Why can't I have sugar in my bread and milk?





## FIRST STEPS

Like a desert vast and cheerless  
Stretch the nurs'ry lands.  
Who could gaze with vision fearless  
O'er those trackless sands?  
Though there waits a shelter peerless—  
Mother's reaching hands!

Eyes alight with exultation,  
Lips that shape a shout;  
Just a flutt'ring hesitation,  
Just a sigh of doubt.  
Dare—and launch a generation!  
Sturdy legs, step out!

## BABY'S EYES

Wise is the baby with eyes of brown,  
Clenching each little hand;  
Wrinkling its forehead into a frown,  
Trying to understand.  
Sweetest and wisest in all the town,—  
Thoughtful baby with eyes of brown.

Mischievous baby with eyes of blue,  
Laughing at other folk;  
Planning and plotting the whole day through  
Some little baby joke.  
Laughing and happy and clever, too,—  
Mischievous baby with eyes of blue.

Calm is the baby with eyes of gray,  
Sweet little stay-at-home.  
Near to the mother in work and play,  
Never will care to roam.  
More of a comfort from day to day,—  
Calm little baby with eyes of gray.

Wilful the baby with eyes of black,  
Ruling us more and more.  
Sunbeams follow the storin-cloud's track  
Brighter than those before.  
Heart is fonder when smiles come back,—  
Wilful baby with eyes of black.

## A LULLABY

Lie still, my little one, shadows are falling,  
Closing thy wide-open, wondering eyes;  
Hark how the voices of dreamland are calling  
Sweet to my little one here where she lies.

Hushaby, baby mine, shadows grow deep;  
Shut those blue eyes of thine, lie still and sleep.  
Naught is affrighting thee, dreams are inviting  
thee,  
Mother is near to thee—sleep, darling, sleep.

What dost thou see in thy faraway gazing?  
What dost thou say in that cooing of thine?  
In thy strange tongue is it wisdom amazing,  
Wise little visitor, baby of mine?

Raindrops are pattering, lull thee to rest;  
Birds are all scattering each to its nest.  
Darkness enfolding thee, mother is holding thee,  
Angels are guarding thee—rest, darling, rest.

Drowsy, my little one? Twilight is darkening,  
Birds are all twittering sweetly good night;  
Whisper thy dreams to me, mother is hearken-  
ing,  
Listening over thee, clasping thee tight.

Lullaby, little one, sweet be thy sleep;  
Hushaby, pretty one, slumbering deep.  
Darkness may cover thee, angels watch over  
thee,  
Mother is near to thee—sleep, darling, sleep.

## AT ONE WEEK OLD

He will be straight and strong and fair,  
With eyes that have a laughing flash;  
A rumple always in his hair,  
And—if he likes—a short mustache.

His voice must be a grumbly bass,—  
With nearly all his father's charm.  
And when we stroll about the place  
I'll love to lean upon his arm!

And when he marries some nice girl—  
Oh me! he'll do it soon, I fear—  
I'm sure she'll love the little curl  
Like that behind his daddy's ear!



### UNFULFILMENT

I see an upland pasture, clover-blown,  
Where grave-eyed cattle graze the meadow-side;  
And in the wavy blot of shade a lonely tree has  
thrown,

A little boy lies dreaming, open-eyed.  
And something in the fair-gowned buckwheat fields,  
And in the hill lined out against the sky,  
And in the kindly spreading tree a subtle bondage  
wields;

I look—and lo! the little boy is I.

Afar, blue peaks that one time edged the world—  
White clouds—a boyhood's realm of Maybe-so;  
And from the deeps of memory a tapestry's unfurled  
Of small boy visions, woven long ago.

And years and deeds went always hand in hand.

In those fair pictures. Yet to-day there seems  
A small voice crying sorrowf'ly from sky and clover-  
land

That I am not the figure of the dreams.



## THEN AND NOW

I can remember, in the long ago,  
How, when the evening shadows slowly grew,  
I nestled closely, as I loved to do,  
And begged a story in the twilight glow.  
But when those mother accents, sweet and low,  
Began some bed-time tale all strange and new,  
I cried—Not that one! Let me listen to  
The one you told last time—the one I know.

Was I so different in the days of yore?  
I sit and dream anew the joys of old,  
Crying to Fate to send them back once more,  
Distrusting what the future may unfold.  
Tho' sweet the hope be of what lies before,  
Sweet is the mem'ry of the tale that's told!

## LITTLE BOY REALM

*Little Boy Realm is far afield,  
And blind is the road, they say;  
But the King and Queen, by the power they  
wield,  
May lead, or may bring away.*

Kindly firm is the royal rule,  
Kind are the kingly eyes;  
And day by day sees gentler sway  
'Neath sunny boyland skies.

But wander-spirits calling us,  
Or sunbeams ling'ring fond  
On some vague peak, roused us to seek  
A path to the beyond.

That loving, kingly hand reached out  
To shoulders, level high;  
Some spark there ran, as man to man,  
And boyhood's realm flew by!

. . . . .

Gently sweet is the gracious Queen,  
Love dwells within her eyes;

And day by day she toils away  
To weave some new surprise.

Her little kingdom brooks no change;  
Though some may roam afar,  
Its hearth-fires burn against return,  
And every door's ajar.

A tired head against her knees,  
Dear chidings, grave or gay,  
And 'neath her hand this grown-up land  
Slips suddenly away.

*Little Boy Realm lies toward the dawn,  
But the highway none may know;  
And oh, if the King and Queen be gone,  
How then may I come and go?*

## REVISITING

If one clear road you cannot find,  
    Since they two laid their scepters down,  
Some fainter paths there are that wind  
    Through valleys to a far-off town,  
Where many dear-remembered things  
Call childhood back on certain wings.

That wall you climbed with all your might,  
    The while you tore your stocking knees,  
Has shrunk to such a puny height  
    You mount upon its crest with ease.  
The tree that was too thick to "shin"  
By some odd means has gotten thin.

That vast expanse you scanned with care,  
    Then crossed with frightened hurrying feet  
Lest traffic overtake you there,  
    Is now a quiet village street.  
Each doorway wide and gatepost high  
Seem smaller to your startled eye.

Old friends that pass look up to smile,  
    Who used to greet you smiling down;  
A magic spell, in this long while,  
Has somehow fallen on the town.

Yet strange! You seem to be again  
As small a boy as you were then.

The little tree that once was tall,  
The quiet street that stirred your fears;  
Your little boyhood's kingdom small  
Have drawn you backward through the years.  
And some old teacher's kindly tone  
Belies his words—"How you have grown!"

The winding path to boyhood days  
Is sometimes very hard to find;  
And yet you trod it when your gaze  
Survey old scenes long left behind.  
While strangers, passing, never guessed  
The rising turmoil in your breast.





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